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ABSTRACT

Developed by the Third Scottish Control Committee on English, this sourcebook for teachers is intended to provide guidance on student assessment in the first and second year of high school. The first section of the sourcebook provides the background information on the development of the guide, while the second section addresses the need for assessment, for whom, and when it happens. The third section discusses types of assessment (formative, diagnostic, continuous, criterion-referenced, and summative), the recording and reporting of assessments, assessment criteria, and assessment validity and reliability. Basic principles are presented in the next section, which is followed by a lengthy section that examines formative assessment in writing, reading, speaking, and listening. Section six discusses summative assessment and the final section takes into consideration departmental procedures for school assessments. Appendixes include a pupil's record of work, a pupil profile, a categorization of school writing, a checklist of reading skills, a lesson plan on attentive listening and oral paraphrasing, an example of examination design, and an example of an examination illustrating the recommended strategy. (HOD)

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Assessment in English in S1 and S2

Lionel Jackson
with
Gordon Liddell and Ernest Spencer

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This is an occasional paper intended for consideration by teachers of English and others concerned with the development of language skills of pupils in Scottish schools. As a discussion paper, it should not be regarded as a policy document or as representing the views of the CCC.

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FOREWORD

This document has been a long, long time in the making.

Aware that teachers of English had a need for guidance on Assessment in S1 and S2, the Third Scottish Central Committee on English took steps to try and meet that need in ways which seemed appropriate at the time. Other developments changed perceptions about the nature of the task and the Fourth Scottish Central Committee on English inherited an enlarged and altered challenge.

That a publication relevant to current need has at last appeared is due to the work of Mr Lionel Jackson in constructing a document which originated in earlier writings by Mr Gordon Liddell, Mr Ernest Spencer and others but which would not have been available to the teaching profession but for his own valuable further thinking, his new insights and his painstaking compilation.

John H Jardine
Chairman
Fourth Scottish Central Committee on English

Section 1

BACKGROUND and INFORMATION

In 1977 the third Scottish Central Committee on English set up a working party of teachers drawn from Fife and Tayside regions to provide guidance in the field of in-school assessment of English in S1 and S2.

The need to do this was based on the observation that many schools were experimenting with assessment procedures involving continuous assessment, folio assessment and reporting by means of profiling as well as using the more conventional in-school examination technique.

The working party, under the chairmanship of Donald MacKenzie, Adviser in English in Tayside, and strengthened by the use of Ernest Spencer, SCRE, and Gordon Liddell, SCDS, as consultants, presented to the Central Committee a useful introductory paper on the range and types of assessment that could and should be used in English Departments. The working party then decided to aim at the production of a paper on in-school examinations. An incomplete draft of this paper was presented to the SCCE and to the first meeting of the new (fourth) SCCE. The SCCE took the view that, in the (present) circumstances, given the kinds of developments that had been taking place in the field of assessment generally and in assessment in English in particular, and especially within the Extended Feasibility Study for Foundation courses, it was an error to present a paper solely on examinations.

On the other hand it was recognised that the need for advice on assessment is as sharp now as it has ever been. These views were remitted to the drafting sub-committee of the working party who reacted with the following proposal: that the existing material should be adapted, so that it dealt with in-school summative assessment in English, and not just with examinations.

At this stage it was proposed that Moray House College of Education be commissioned, on behalf of the Scottish Central Committee on English, to produce a document of guidance on summative assessment in English and that the work be undertaken by a lecturer seconded for this purpose, who would make use of the materials already produced by the working party and whose work would be supervised by a steering committee set up by the Scottish Central Committee on English. Mr Lionel Jackson, Moray House English Department, agreed to undertake the task. The steering committee comprised Mr Philip Banks, then Munn and Dunning Development Officer, Mr Ernest Spencer, formerly of the Scottish Council for Research in Education, Mr Donald Mackenzie, Adviser in English for Tayside and Mr Frank Pignatelli, former Divisional Education Officer, Renfrewshire. During the course of his work it became clear to Mr Jackson that summative assessment is only part of the picture in S1/S2 and that formative assessment, which had been included in the working party's introductory document, must receive equal if not greater emphasis and the overlap between the two areas be considered. This thinking is reflected in the present paper.

Since the document would consider both theory and practice, a number of schools were asked by Mr Jackson to complete a questionnaire and useful material was received from the English Departments of Airdrie Academy, Eastwood High School, Falkirk High School, Inverurie High School, Liberton High School, Leith Academy, North Kelvinside Secondary School, Our Lady's High School (in conjunction with Braidhurst High School), Penicuik High School, Preston Lodge High School, Westhill Academy and Whitfield High

School.

No single system of assessment and profiling will suit every school. What the document attempts is a survey of the topic from both the theoretical and practical perspectives. It is hoped that English Departments will discuss and review their arrangements in the light of the guidance offered.

Section 2

THE NEED FOR ASSESSMENT

2.1 WHY IS IT NECESSARY?

Much educational discussion currently centres on assessment. The review of the 10 - 14 age group, the 14 - 16 programme, the 16 - 18 Action Plan: in these and other areas assessment is a major strand. Indeed, some teachers feel that educationists are obsessed by assessment, that some of the time devoted to it could be better spent in teaching and, in the case of English, that the difficulties in making valid and reliable judgments undercut much of the apparatus of assessment.

Such a view is understandable but misleading. In fact, teaching implies assessment. The teacher is teaching for the pupil's benefit, not his[1] own. He has a professional obligation to help his pupils' progress and to monitor that progress, whether formally or informally. The validity of his judgments will depend partly on intuition developed and reinforced over the years and partly on the soundness of the assessment devices he uses.

2.2 FOR WHOM?

2.2.1 Parents

Clearly, the pupil's parents are important "customers" in the assessment process. Parent-teacher associations, parents' evenings, open access and community schools reflect both greater openness and greater accountability. Parents have a right to receive a lucid, informative report on their child's attainments and progress, a report which may include grades - and an explanation of the meaning of grades - and comment. In English, in S1 and S2, it is now common practice to comment on pupil attainment and weakness in each of the four modes, Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, but also to have a flexible format which allows for comment on other facets of learning such as attitude, awareness and sense of humour.

2.2.2 Teachers

At the end of S1 we are not immediately concerned with employers or educators in the tertiary sector, though there are signs that a fuller school record may be of interest to such people. But for S3 and S4 teachers, especially in view of the new emphases of the 14 - 16 arrangements, a detailed profile of pupils' work in English in S1/S2 is essential. Even where tests and examinations are used, perhaps in conjunction with aggregated course work marks, as discriminatory devices at the end of S2, these should be backed up by a detailed profile covering the four modes, and in particular, pupils' strengths and potential. If not, much of the hoped-for flexibility of the new S3/S4 courses will be lost.

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[1] In the absence of a convenient alternative, "his" throughout this document refers to both female and male teachers and pupils.

Assessment of pupil progress is also vital for remedial teachers. Especially in English, which is a basic skill for all other subjects, there is a need for early screening for whole year groups and appropriate diagnostic evaluation for individual children in S1 and similar monitoring in S2. Departments should ensure that adequate channels exist for such reporting on both a formal and informal basis. If "Language Across the Curriculum" is to have any meaning, it must involve not only teaching but assessment. The ideal is a school language policy which offers guidance not only on the linguistic demands and levels of various subjects but which gives teachers of other subjects access to pupil assessment by the English Department and, in turn, reports back on the problems pupils face, individually or collectively, in their field. This would help rebut the view held by some pupils that English is what one does in English lessons and nowhere else.[1]

Of all the educators in contact with the pupil, the class teacher is the one most concerned with assessment. He is the custodian of the pupil's development and must be able to evaluate that development. Since in English progress is rarely lineal but more often spiral, intermittent or subterranean, and since much language development occurs outside school, the English teacher must develop a finely tuned perception of his pupils' needs, attainments and potential. He should have access to reports from the primary school. He should be able to integrate in his mind the various modes of assessment he uses, whether they be the day-to-day intuitive responses he makes to his pupils' efforts, the written or oral comments he makes on their work or the more formal apparatus of tests and assignments. He needs justifiable criteria which define the targets the pupils can appropriately aim at and the general standards to be expected from pupils of that age.

2.2.3 Pupils

Lastly and most important, assessment is for the pupil. He after all is the client whom educators are there to serve. Sometimes he is almost lost sight of. Let us pose three questions.

(a) Does the pupil understand what assessment means?

Few pupils could, one suspects, say what assessment is and why it happens. They may think of it solely in terms of grades, tests and examinations, imposed from above with a selective, punitive or motivational end in view. Streaming and setting will reinforce this idea. Pupils may not realise that assessment is going on most of the time. Yet if assessment is part of the teaching and learning process it is something that the pupils should understand and take part in. He must see the teacher as a coach rather than an instructor; and this applies particularly in English where progress in the four modes of Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening

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[1] See SPENCER, E. Writing matters across the curriculum, 1983, for a detailed survey of pupils' and teachers' attitudes to "who teaches what" in written English.

NO, TRACY. I AM NOT GOING TO RIP IT UP AND CHUCK IT IN THE BUCKET. THIS TIME YOU ARE GOING TO RIP IT UP AND CHUCK IT IN THE BUCKET.

Pupil involvement

may be slow or spasmodic. The pupil in the workshop or the gymnasium knows he must practise certain movements to gain proficiency in a particular craft or sport; if he is awkward or inept he will be shown how to do better. He is undergoing formative assessment, though he may not know it.

Whatever the English lesson, whether library research, writing a letter as part of a project, giving a two-minute speech or reading a novel, assessment of various kinds will be involved. The teacher is providing opportunities for learning and, we must stress, for re-learning; the pupil is or should be asking himself how well he is doing and how he could do better. In the best classroom situations he can, with the teacher's help and his own progress in self-assessment, learn from his mistakes and build on his strengths.

(b) Does the pupil see the need for self assessment?

The typical pupil, asked by the teacher how he would rate his work, often shows surprise, since he thinks assessment is the teacher's job. If pressed, he is often at a loss. He has little conception of criteria and is likely to be undiscriminating or unduly harsh in his judgments of his own work. Yet judgments about language, both as message and medium, are an important part of what the English teacher aims to develop, especially in a culture where strident, biased or disingenuous utterances fill the air.

We feel that self assessment should receive more emphasis in the S1/S2 classroom. It is linked with peer group assessment. Whether an improvised dialogue, an article for the class folder or a letter to a person outside the school is involved, group evaluation can be a highly educational process. The teacher should also occasionally produce work - a story, article or talk - give his own assessment of it and ask the pupils for theirs. They will then see that making judgments implies formulating appropriate criteria.

(c) Does the pupil take part in the assessment process?

Self assessment, as outlined above, requires pupil involvement in the assessment process. But there is also a case for pupil involvement in the recording and reporting of

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assessment. Some school reports have a space for a pupil's comments on his own progress. There is also a place for using negotiated pupil-and-teacher assessments in certain areas of work. For example, a teacher may comment that a pupil is slowly gaining confidence in speaking before his classmates. The pupil may agree with this but may wish to add that he is good at telling jokes out of school. Both teacher and pupil may learn from this procedure.

2.3 WHEN DOES IT HAPPEN?

We have already partly answered this by saying that assessment is going on most of the time. We do not mean by this that the teacher is a Gradgrind measuring how much is poured into his little vessels every minute of the day, but we do mean that the good teacher has an awareness of the sort of learning that is taking place and of the linguistic competence of each pupil in the various areas of English. His views on these matters must not harden into fixed opinions and he will modify them as the work of the class proceeds. Early in S1 and again in S2 it may be school practice to use standardized tests of various kinds, though the teacher must beware of premature labelling of pupils and of "teaching to the test". Most of the assessment, however, will be based on the work in progress, much of it topic-oriented. Essentially the assessment process has three parts:

(a) comments, spoken or written, on individual pieces of the pupil's work, much of which will be collected in a folder;

(b) an ongoing record of work completed, with comments or assessments where appropriate, for the pupil (Appendix 1);

(c) a profile, built up on the basis of (a) and (b) and on teacher observation and intuition (Appendix 2).

In (a) the pupil will be encouraged to acquire the notion of appropriateness to purpose in his work. For (b) a possible model is given in Appendix 1. Where grades are used, the pupil must have a clear understanding of what they denote, the concept of purpose again being important. It is too time consuming to record all work covered. The record might include projects duly completed, individual or group writing activities, books read, talks given to the class, aural comprehension or other listening activities etc. The pupil should be able to take part in completing the record. The aim is to build up a sense of pupil and teacher working together to produce good work. The profile (c) is the core of the assessment process because it has both an analytical and a diagnostic function. An over elaborate profile will tend to produce a box-ticking attitude in the busy teacher; at the same time there is nothing to prevent the use of skills and activities checklists as back-ups to the profile entries. We suggest a two-part profile, section A to be concerned with strengths and weaknesses in the four modes; section B to include comments on pupil attitudes plus a record of test and examination scores. There is a case for making section A available to the pupil.

As we indicated above, an overemphasis on the mechanics of assessment can be wearisome for teachers and demotivational for pupils. The "if it moves, assess it" attitude will find little favour with English teachers as a body. A balance has to be struck. Too little is unfair to pupils; too much is unfair to teachers.

SEE ME. A'M A P.T RIGHT? AND JIST BEEN MADE AN A.R.M. FOR F. AND G. AT S. GRADE FOR THE S.E.B. THAT USED TAE BE S.C.E.E.B. AND MA DEPARTMENT DISNAE UNDERSTAND ME!
V. 84

Wearisome for teachers

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Section 3

DEFINITIONS and CONCEPTS

3.1 TYPES OF ASSESSMENT

3.1.1 Formative Assessment

As the word suggests, formative assessment is a moulding process (as opposed to summative assessment which is a measuring process). It is a constructive scrutiny of the pupil's work. It may, and often does, take the form of comments, written or spoken, on a pupil's work, in whatever mode of English. It aims to help the pupil see his strengths and weaknesses, bearing in mind the purpose for which he has written, spoken, read or listened, with a view to improvement. It is specific rather than general. If grades or marks are used, their meaning must be explicit. Formative assessment does not preclude tests, however sophisticated, so long as the information gleaned from them is used to help pupils and teachers at a later stage. Any assessment which is recycled into the learning and teaching process is a formative one. It is a way of "getting to know the student in order to teach him better" (Rowntree, 1977, p 122). It is predictive but not in a narrow sense. It is not a categoric or formal statement of a pupil's attainments (though such a statement may be part of it) but an implied plan of action for the teacher, the pupil and perhaps others.

This broad concept clearly covers a variety of activities. On the one hand there is the identification of problems, say in spelling, construction of sentences or paragraphs, in catching the signals generated by linguistic markers in a reading passage, in finding the confidence and the words to speak before one's peers, with a view to choosing strategies to resolve them. On the other hand the teacher will wish to encourage any aptitudes and interests he discovers in his pupil. He may have an ear for natural dialogue or a flair for researching certain topics. A sense of success in these could help to motivate him in other areas of English.

Under the umbrella of formative assessment we may include monitoring, that is, checking how well the course is going, whether it is creating learning problems and failures, and whether the pupils are motivated and their interest sustained. The teacher's evaluation of his own work is crucial to this process.

Note that all types of formative assessment can and should involve self assessment for both pupils and teacher. An element of peer group assessment is sometimes possible and desirable.

3.1.2 Diagnostic Assessment and Attainment Tests

Because of its medical overtones, the term "diagnostic" has been associated with the idea of weakness and deficit. Current thinking prefers the concept of non-attainment and the causes of this, whether in the pupil's level of knowledge or the strategies he employs, or in the nature of the teaching and the tasks he encounters. In this sense the teacher must be alert to the learning difficulties of the pupil and seek to minimise them, by devising tasks and group activities which promote a sense of success rather than failure. Some pupil problems, however, call for the attention of the remedial staff or the child psychologist: teachers must be on the lookout for the pupil who frequently loses his place from line to line in reading, cannot hear when the speaker turns away from him, speaks too loudly or not at all, reverses letters in reading and writing, has a short or nil attention span, etc. Close liaison with the remedial staff, who have a range of specialist assessment techniques available for the individual pupil, is clearly essential.

Some standardised attainment tests may contain a diagnostic element. The London Reading Tests show, according to the publishers, "whether the child can work without the aid of a teacher or will need help: they also show which children need remedial help." Commonly used attainment tests for a whole year group are the Neale Analysis of Reading Ability and the Schonell B Reading Test. Some reservations have been expressed about these tests (see Stibbs, 1979). They should not be regarded as the last word on a pupil´s ability and should be considered in conjunction with primary school reports and the teacher´s own assessments, particularly in the areas of speaking and listening. Commercially published tests have the great advantage of standardization over a wide sample (6,000 pupils in the case of the Edinburgh and Charteris Reading Tests) and therefore will perform a particular function better than the teacher perhaps could. But the point to stress here is that development and growth in language is a highly complex process and no single assessment procedure can reflect such complexity.

3.1.3 Continuous Assessment

Over a period of time - a term or a school year - the English teacher will want to build up a picture of his pupils, an assessment of what they have learned, what skills they have acquired or strengthened and even perhaps how much they have "grown". This will involve a process of continuous (sometimes called cumulative) assessment. This umbrella term has perhaps been stretched too far. A series of weekly, decontextualised vocabulary tests might show little about pupil progress or supply useful feedback to either teacher or pupil. A folio of written work, on the other hand, does imply an ongoing process, especially if the pupil is asked to decide which pieces of work best represent his abilities. A sequence of projects will also yield a number of grades, comments or tasks "duly performed" which will offer a coherent assessment picture if a balance of language activities is covered in the term or year. If, for school report purposes, a final grade has to be produced, it will not normally be a mere aggregate of grades achieved over the period, but will take into account the pupil´s effort, achievements and weaknesses in all his language activities.

3.1.4 Criterion-referenced and Norm-referenced Assessment

Here it is convenient to distinguish between criterion-referenced and norm-referenced assessment. A criterion-referenced test seeks to record pupils´ attainments in specific curricular goals or "criteria" and is not concerned with the performance of one pupil relative to another. An example from the world beyond school would be the driving test: we do not hear anyone say, "He only got a D in his driving test": one passes it or not. In its strictest sense, a CRT assumes that specific goals can be conceptualised, stated, taught and mastered, and their assessment standardised. A norm-referenced test, on the other hand, is one which seeks to place pupils in an order of merit, generally using grades, bands, percentages or other numerical scores so as to give "a comparision between the performance of the tested pupil and the average per-formances at the test by equivalent pupils" (Stibbs, 1970, p 82). Some schools use a test or examination version of such an assessment at the end of the second year with the discriminatory purpose of streaming or banding pupils in the third year. Some teachers feel that the "mastery learning" of limited goals is peripheral to the main drive of English teaching and that CRT is not for them. These same teachers, however, often feel that norm-referenced or discriminatory testing is acceptable. Later in this document we attempt to show that the criterion-referenced approach has much to commend it in the S1/S2 situation.

3.1.5 Summative Assessment

Summative assessment (sometimes called terminal, final or end-of-course assessment) is, as the word implies, a pronouncement on a pupil's skills, knowledge and attainments at the end of a course. Its aim is to convey to pupils, teachers, parents and others a rating of a pupil's abilities at a given time. It may be based on tests, examinations or an aggregate of grades or scores achieved during the course or on a summation of some or all of these.

3.1.6 Overlap

The above categories of assessment are not all mutually exclusive. Diagnostic assessment shades into formative: criterion referencing involves some concept of a norm; components of continuous assessment may be included in a final summative assessment, which may or may not include an examination; scripts from examinations may be used formatively. As in much educational discussion, labelling becomes a matter of semantics. More important is a clear understanding of the nature, purpose and effects of any assessment. The ends should determine the means.

3.2 ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING

We shall look at this area in more detail later. Here we merely remind teachers that assessing and recording assessment are different processes. Some or all of the following records may be in use:

(a) confidential and/or academic reports from the feeder primaries

(b) the school's own report

(c) reports from the Remedial Department

(d) the teacher's mark book, perhaps with brief comments

(e) monthly or other record sheets required by school management

(f) a progress or work chart covering selected areas of English, available to the pupil, built up as the year proceeds and including pupil comments (Appendix 1)

(g) a pupil profile, completed at the end of term, half-year or year, covering in broad terms, with comments and/or grades, the pupil's strengths and weaknesses in the four modes or in the sub-skills of these (Appendix 2)

(h) a report to parents based on some or all of the above, usually part of a general report on all subjects, together with, in some cases, parents' written comments on this.

Though the trend towards more detailed description of achievement is commendable, over-documentation can be counter-productive. The profile should be considered in the core document, since it contains the analytical function, with other records and reports contributing to it or deriving from it. Whatever the arrangements, the educational needs of the pupil are of paramount importance.

3.3 CRITERIA

The concept of criteria is crucial in thinking about assessment. Unfortunately the word has come to signify different, though related, ideas.

3.3.1 Criteria as Standards

If we say that "Marie is good at English" we would mean different things according to whether Marie was a foreign learner of English, a P3 pupil, an S2 pupil or a university student. Different standards or criteria would apply in each case. This is the broad meaning of "criteria".

3.3.2 Criteria as Aims

At the same time, being "good" at English implies the possession, depending partly on age or status as noticed above, of certain skills or aptitudes. These then constitute the criteria by which we judge success in English - the abilities English teachers would hope to develop. They might include some or all of the following:

"Writing criteria" - central ideas

(a) Fluency, quality and relevance of ideas and observations.

(b) Confidence as a communicator: the degree to which the writer's sense of the worth of his/her perception of things is conveyed.

(c) Logic - the ability to think out and organise what you want to say in an order calculated to have a desired effect on the reader.

(d) "Tone", or the ability to find the right words and style for the purpose and the reader.

(e) Use of the conventions of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Appendix 3 contains more detailed criteria for writing, designated in terms of "Qualities in Writing" related to purposes and readership.[1]

"Reading criteria" - central ideas

(a) Literal understanding - the ability to decode a text into meaningful words and sentences.

(b) "Scanning", to find particular relevant pieces of information in a text.

(c) Making inferences from the text, using one's own knowledge and experience.

(d) Linking the writer's message to one's own experience (e.g. by empathising with the characters or with the writer, or by re-expressing the writer's idea in one's own way).

(e) Identifying the writer's attitudes to his topic and to the reader, where appropriate.

(f) Making some judgment about the text - about the message it conveys, the means by which it is conveyed, the writer's attitudes, how interesting, enjoyable, difficult the text is, etc.

It is important to note that these "central ideas" for defining criteria in Reading are not in a hierarchical order. The work of the "Effective Use of Reading" team at Notthingham University (cf. Lunzer and Gardner, 1979) has shown that all reading above minimum recognition skills involves all these activities in some way.

"Speaking criteria" - central ideas

(a) Psychological: acquisition of confidence in one-to-one or group situations: ability to initiate talk.

(b) Physiological: audibility, articulation, projection.

(c) Semantic: fluency, coherence, emphasis, syntactic control.

(d) Sociolinguistic: ability to tune in to aural/oral context; choice of register and content according to circumstances; use of strategies for participating in discussion.

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[1] From SPENCER, E, Writing Matters Across the Curriculum (1983). Mr Spencer says that his categorization of school writing "is intended to make more obvious the relevance of various "writing purposes" to school work. It may suggest to teachers how they might make a variety of writing demands, while still aiming to help pupils acquire knowledge and develop skills in the context of their subjects".

"Listening criteria" - central ideas

Two useful categorizations (among the many possible) are:

1. (a) general listening (remembering detail, following directions, answering questions etc.);

   (b) critical listening (distinguishing true from false, comparing and contrasting ideas etc.), and

2. (a) in regulatory situations (listening in order to be able to carry out a task etc.),

   (b) in personal/interactive situations (e.g. listening in order to respond appropriately to others etc.),

   (c) in imaginative situations (e.g. listening to imaginative literature to respond to author's purpose etc.),

   (d) in discussion situations (listening in order to present counter argument in debate etc.),

   (e) in informational situations (e.g. listening to identify significant detail, main ideas etc.).

The "criteria" listed here under the four modes of English are the equivalent of general aims.

3.3.3 Criteria as Objectives

Usuallly, however, we need to be more specific than these general criteria or aims suggest. We need "criteria of achievement". Here "criteria" are equivalent to objectives, that is, skills or abilities which can be specified, taught and assessed. If the S1/S2 English course includes story writing, criteria of achievement would probably include skills in handling dialogue, sketching in character, indicating background and creating suspense. In speaking, an obvious criterion is audibility. In reading we may wish our pupils to be able to grasp the topic of a passage from a rapid scanning. In certain areas of English a form of criterion-referenced assessment is possible. Here again, "criterion" means an objective, usually of a limited kind, which the pupil aims to achieve, e.g. the appropriate format for a letter or magazine article, depending on purpose and context.

3.3.4 Criteria as Evidence

How do we know if the pupil has satisfied the criteria of achievement? We suggest that teachers' accumulated knowledge and intuitions about what qualities they are looking for in Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening be backed up by checklists, compiled after departmental discussion, which spell out the objectives the pupil should have in mind in a given area of work and the evidence by which success is judged. Sometimes the evidence can be documented by samples of pupils' work with comments and assessment. Wherever possible the pupils should be told or shown what qualities of work the teacher is looking for, i.e. what constitutes evidence of good performance. They will then experience less often the misery of not knowing where they have gone wrong.

3.4 VALIDITY

A thoroughly valid assessment instrument tests what it intends to test and not, through ambiguity, imprecision or other faults, something else. The concept of validity is often applied to tests and examinations but in fact should apply to every form of assessment. If for a composition we deduct 1 mark out of 20 for every spelling error we would not make a valid assessment of writing ability (which involves a gamut of skills) or even of spelling ability (for which a standardised test would be better). A valid assessment would take account of the purpose of the writing (see Appendix 1), for example recapturing feelings evoked by a childhood incident, and the evidence within the composition which showed success or lack of success in this.

A valid assessment may exist in the mind of the teacher without its being written down. To be formative it must be communicated to the pupil.

Much assessment in English is subjective and informal but this does not necessarily impugn its validity. If we select one particular oral skill as a criterion of achievement, say the ability to talk well about a hobby or interest, it is clear that Billy Caspar in Kes meets the criterion. He talks well to his teacher and classmates on one occasion and to his teacher alone on another. Judged by a different criterion - the ability to speak up for himself to an authoritative adult (his headteacher) - he fails.

Since competence in English is developed both outside and inside the school, it is salutary to remember that what the pupils have learnt is not necessarily what we have taught. This complicates the notion of validity but does not remove the need for it.

Neither does it remove the need for planning, even though some outcomes of the course will be unforeseen by and surprising to teacher and pupils. A way of planning is needed which does not sacrifice flexibility, but which provides a set of purposes from which specific work can be derived and to which unplanned activity can be linked. This set of purposes will form the "blueprint of the course" and of the assessment of it. The blueprint may be modified as the course proceeds, and it is advisable before planning any assessment, particularly in the case of an examination, to write a description of the work of the course, which is in effect a revision of the course blueprint. It should normally be possible to answer the question "What are the qualities which indicate attainment?" by detailed definition of what exactly we mean by saying, for instance, that the aim or the overall purpose of the work was "to enrich the pupil's experience" or "develop narrative writing" or whatever: and what kind of behaviour, or what sort of answer to what sort of question, we will accept as evidence that his experience has indeed been enriched or that his ability to tell a story has indeed been developed. Thus we see that the notion of validity is linked to the notion of criteria.

3.5 RELIABILITY

MY MA'S NO WEEL !
GREAT ! OUR CLASS DONE THIS JIST LAST WEEK !
I BROKE BOTH MA AIRMS ON THE WAY TO THIS EXAM.
HEY ! I USED TO LIVE THERE !
AND MA PEN HIS RAN OOT .

Reliability: No chance factors

A reliable assessment produces results which are dependable or consistent. In other words, if results are to be meaningful we expect them to be consistent with what they might have been if the assessment had been made by someone else on another day. In a reliable examination, for example, there are no chance factors influencing the circumstances in which the examination is set, taken or marked.

In some areas of English assessment, absolute reliability is easier to achieve than absolute validity, for example in objective testing including multiple choice tests. In fact there is a danger that if a test achieves high reliability we assume that high validity is also achieved. Thus a comprehension or interpretation test can be couched in terms which permit an objective, reliable assessment, but whether the test is measuring some important aspect of reading or merely the pupil's facility in digging the correct nuggets from the quarry of the passage is open to debate.

As we have noted, English teachers are well aware that assessment in their subject is heavily subjective, particularly in the areas of oral/aural skills and continuous writing skills. Attitudinal factors also come into play, though perhaps to a lesser extent, in the assessment of reading skills or comprehension, which is usually thought to be more reliable.

We should not feel too guilty about this characteristic of English. It may be that subjectivity is more prevalent in the assessment of other areas of the curriculum than is commonly thought. Certainly it is in the nature of a communication to have different import and even different sense for different people. It is part of the richness of language and of thought that there can be a variety of responses to one utterance.

This does not mean, however, that we ignore reliability or that we concentrate our assessment on those more easily definable areas of our subject in which assessors can achieve some degree of consistency. Tempting though it may be to disregard reliability altogether, it would be a useless assessment in which chance had played a significant part in determining the results, and curricular choices and career decisions would then be made on an unsound basis.

Section 4

BASIC PRINCIPLES

Although assessment is a multi-faceted process, good practice must surely be based on sound principles. It is hoped that most English teachers would endorse the following points, some of which have been stated or implied already.

4.1 Assessment should subserve teaching, not dominate it. The pupil is the client and assessment is for his benefit. Particularly in S1 and S2, assessment should be formative rather than summative.

4.2 This implies flexibility not rigidity. It is difficult to justify, for instance, a series of regular weekly or monthly tests which determine the length of units of classwork and the pace at which the pupils are expected to progress.

4.3 It follows that the needs and achievements of the individual pupil must be keep constantly in mind; that criterion-referenced rather than norm-referenced assessment will often be more appropriate; and that each pupil´s progress must be monitored and recorded.

4.4 Teachers should not readily give up valuable teaching time to formal testing (including interpretation exercises that test rather than teach). This is not to say that, having escaped from the backwash of an examination-dominated curriculum in English, teachers should flounder in a sea of improvisation. Teaching should have an aim but the aim may be modifiable. In a unit study of local speech, for example, the teacher´s chief aim may be to distinguish between accent and dialect and he will want to know if his pupils have grasped this point but he will not need to set a formal test on it. He may even be prepared to ditch his aim in favour of another one: to rouse interest in the richness of local speech and to concede that assessing the level of such interest is difficult.

4.5 Though assessment often singles out one of the four "modes" of English - Reading, Writing, Listening, Talking (is Thinking a fifth?) - teaching should always keep in mind the indivisibility of the subject. Each mode intermeshes with the others and in the case of aural/oral activities may involve paralinguistic features as part of the communicative act.

4.6 Course planning precedes assessment, which should be based on what has been taught (English being what it is, it can never be strictly tied to it). Teaching is usually most effective when the pattern of events is:

(i) Thought and discussion about aims and intentions, having regard to the needs and state of development of the pupils concerned. Production of a scheme of work together with supporting documents.

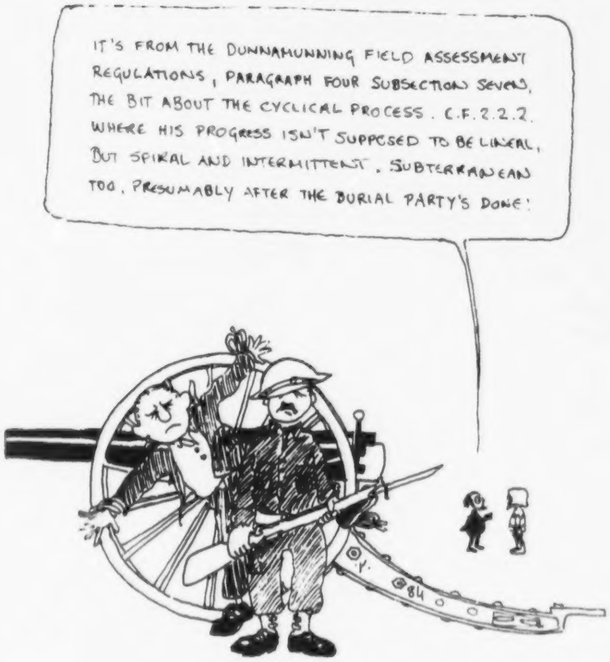
(ii) Teaching the course; flexibly, allowing modifications to the plan as pupils' responses make them appropriate.

(iii) Valid and reliable assessment of pupils' attainment.

(iv) Recording of this where appropriate.

(v) Consideration of the next appropriate steps to take, given the pupils' attainment or lack of it.

4.7 Good English teaching is thus a cyclical process, analogous in some respects to the scientific process of hypothesis ("It would be useful to teach these pupils these points"), experiment (the actual teaching), inference ("the teaching scheme was successful except in these areas"), reformulation of the initial hypothesis - and so on.


IT'S FROM THE DUNNAMUNNING FIELD ASSESSMENT REGULATIONS, PARAGRAPH FOUR SUBSECTION SEVEN, THE BIT ABOUT THE CYCLICAL PROCESS. C.F. 2.2.2. WHERE HIS PROGRESS ISN'T SUPPOSED TO BE LINEAL, BUT SPIRAL AND INTERMITTENT. SUBTERRANEAN TOO, PRESUMABLY AFTER THE BURIAL PARTY'S DONE!

A cyclical process

4.8 In our concern to assess the assessable we must not be tempted to measure the non-measurable. Teachers may feel the need to assess such qualities as sensitivity, creativity and personal response but they should be conscious that there is an even greater danger of unreliability in so doing than there is in assessing more clearly definable skills or qualities. Development in English is so complex and difficult to define that a healthy scepticism in relation to all apparently clear-cut judgments about it is not amiss.

4.9 Assessment should accentuate the positive: it should find out what pupils do know and can do, rather than establish their ignorance or inadequacy. We must avoid the type of self-fulfilling prophecy as a result of which a pupil will "gradually adjust his behaviour so as to become more like our image than he was before ... Teacher expectation plays the major part in helping 'highs' to become higher and 'lows' to become lower" (Rowntree, 1977, pp 42 - 43). There is no compulsion to design tests which some pupils are bound to fail. "We must challenge the extent to which assessment during an English course needs to be discriminatory at all" (Lamont, 1981, p 5).

4.10 The place for discrimination is within the pupil´s mind. The concept of self assessment must be accepted by pupils and teachers and definite steps taken to implement it.

4.11 An open approach to assessment is important. Insights into assessment, its meaning and its problems should be encouraged among pupils and parents. Both need to know why, for instance that "60" in English does not mean the same thing as "60" in Maths, they need to know about the different purposes of assessment (Why? When? What? How? For whom?) and they have the right to hear or read what the pupil´s performance is, in language they can understand. Attention should therefore be paid to the reporting of assessment in simple language, including explanations of the meaning of figures and descriptions of achievement.

4.12 There is need for greater stress on assessment as a description of achievement, as an instrument of remediation and reinforcement of success and as a vehicle for meaningful statements in reports to pupils themselves, teachers, parents and others.

4.13 There should be regular reconsideration by each English Department as a team of their curricula, methods and assessment procedures to avoid ossification of any of these. Such reappraisal is likely to lead to less reliance on traditional test formats and more experimentation with folios of work, course-work assessment, oral assessment and different types of examinations.

4.14 Assessment in S1/S2 should be seen as part of a teaching and learning process stretching from S1 to S6. In particular, the insights gained from the Munn/Dunning Programme should be given practical expression. The concept of assessment as an integral part of the work of the class, not a rigid matrix forced upon them, is crucial. The emphasis on extended assessment (the "film" of a pupil´s performance rather than a final "snapshot")[1] is especially relevant to the first two years of secondary English.

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[1] KIRK, G. Curriculum and assessment in the Scottish secondary school: a study of the Munn and Dunning reports, 1982.

Section 5

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

5.1 PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

5.1.1 Formative assessment: what it means in practice

It can be argued that all assessment can be used formatively. The end-of-term examination, which is a summative test, can be gone over in class, the correct answers given, pupils warned about good spelling and punctuation, fluent work in composition read out and commended and model answers for interpretation tests dictated. It is questionable, however, whether this kind of work always offers the kind of psychological momentum pupils need to derive benefit. They may be more concerned about checking the marker's arithmetic than identifying weaknesses and remedying them.

On the other hand the boy who has little skill in or reward from writing but who knows all about inshore fishing (this is a real example) may be willing to struggle to convey his fascination on paper and make many redrafts of the work before he is satisfied. Thanks to the teacher's and his own formative assessment of his writing he is willing to make what are for him huge efforts to improve. Formative assessment then should be as immediate as possible, it should focus on a specific aspect of work (paragraphing, pictorial detail, standard usage, reading speed, metaphor or whatever) and it should aim to win the co-operation of the pupil. The teacher-pupil relationship should be one of partnership rather than dominance. This applies equally to the more able pupil. In assessing his work we say in effect: "Good - you have some skills here. Let's try something more demanding".

And let us remember that skills are not ends in themselves. "'Future-directedness' is the crucial characteristic of skills", notes Ernest Spencer, "and I believe this applies to the reading and writing skills acquired in school. Education should develop in people a sense of continuous change in themselves, which they can control themselves by their choice of activities and by their ability to take in new ideas and learn new skills. Every achievement, new piece of knowledge, skill, problem met and solved, makes you a new person, capable of facing new challenges and eager to continue to learn and 'grow'."[1]

Can we assess "growth"? Should we attempt to? One response to these questions might be that, rather than try to "conquer all mysteries by rule and line", we should teach and assess the skills and leave the "growth" to look after itself. This seems too easy a view. For instance, the art of reading both text and sub-text is one we would wish to foster. Only a reader with this skill will catch the smybolism of the "three trees on the low sky" in The Journey of the Magi, for example. The pupil's surprise and delight, if he experiences them, at such a discovery, are perhaps too private to assess but the reading skill which triggers them is

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1. SPENCER, E. The place of assessment in teaching writing. SCOLA Conference, March 1982.

not. Skills and growth are interdependent.

5.1.2 Diagnosis and remediation

In the wide sense any formative assessment will be diagnostic. We all know pupils who produce ill-written, unenthusiastic, laborious writing, devoid of punctuation but replete with spelling errors. A "diagnostic" assessment will focus on problems of this kind and it may be that specific exercises on these points would prove helpful. But we should also try to "diagnose" the whole writing situation: a child who has not had much success in writing may feel no urge to write on certain topics especially if this will expose him to further adverse comment. As Connie and Harold Rosen remind us:

> "It is easy to think of many reasons why a young child should not want to write and very difficult to think of reasons why he should. Even more baffling is the problem of what a young child thinks he is doing when he is writing, other than submitting to the will of adults and putting writing in the same category as potty training, kiss grandma and grace before meals."[1]

Sometimes superficially poor writing shows a fair degree of syntactic development or even a real desire to communicate. Billy's "Tall Story" (again in Kes), despite its many "faults", conveys sharply enough the boy's yearning for a better world than the one he inhabits.

It is important to give struggling pupils the taste of success, even at such a simple level as writing a single sentence about a character in a picture, correctly copying a piece about Hearts or Hibs into his scrapbook or filling in some empty balloons in a strip cartoon. The idea of the "diagnosis of success" is one which should receive greater emphasis.

5.1.3 Checklists

The last few years have seen a rich harvest of checklists of various kinds. Categorisations and taxonomies have multiplied. There has been in some quarters a corresponding resistance to this development, which is seen as symptomatic of the grid-making or box-ticking mentality or as offering a spurious instant kit for teachers.

Used with discretion, however, checklists have an essential part to play in the teaching and assessment of English. The subject is not so unitary that it cannot be divided. There are different component aspects of reading, writing, speaking, and listening which both pupil and teacher should be aware of. Many of them can be separately taught and assessed. We therefore suggest that (a) a list of activities and purposes and (b) a list of the criteria by which these will be assessed should be drawn up. These lists would be a reference guide rather than a set of standing orders.

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1. ROSEN, C and H. The language of primary school children, 1973.

In any particular teaching situation, for instance asking a pupil to convey a message to a distant listener or audience, the purpose and nature of the activity and the two or three criteria for success can be simply stated and understood by the messenger.

With checklists and taxonomies, the danger to avoid is over-categorisation, which can become a net in which both teaching and assessment become entangled.

5.1.4 The formative use of course work assessment

What we are stressing here is continuity. This is more difficult in English than in some other subjects, for example French, where even in a "communicative" approach certain tenses will come at a later stage, or chemistry, where simple concepts on say salts precede more complex reactions. English must sometimes seem to the pupil a series of unrelated bits - of writing, poetry, drills etc. The teacher may have a series of marks in his markbook which suggest a picture of pupil progress or the lack of it but the pupil may not have a similar picture, especially if his written work is on pieces of paper easily lost, and never re-drafted, edited or "published".

Work centred upon a theme or topic may give a sense of cohesion, especially if there is an end product, but even here we may not be giving the pupils a sense of improvement. In a topic on say Monsters we may wish pupils to search the Library for details of monsters in myth and legend: if a pupil then produces thin or irrelevant material he must be given more practice in this particular reference skill though not necessarily on the same topic. Thus any grades, marks or comments will not just be filed away but used to improve future work.

Part of the formative process is in helping the pupil to see that language has many different styles and modes just as it has many processes. Thus in a topic on Sport - Its Pleasures and Problems, it may be possible for a pupil to interview a sportsman or woman, amateur or professional. Few pupils could do this well without thinking about the type of questions to be asked etc. and practising the technique in a simulation first. And they should become aware that the skill needed for this purpose is very different from that needed in listening to such an interview and listing the main points under say the headings Pleasure and Problems.

We must also remember that beyond the specific skills to be practised and improved there are the wider aims that English teachers understand but are sometimes unwilling to expatiate upon. One school lists general and specific aims as follows:

Broad educational goals
Departmental aims
Course aims
Lesson objectives
Behavioural objectives

and adds the comment:

> "As we move down through the list, the focus becomes narrower, sharper and the desired result is stated more specifically. So, one of the broad educational goals might be stated as being: 'To develop a knowledge and understanding of the self and the social and physical environment in which we live.' In attempting to achieve this within the confines of the subject we might have as our departmental aim: 'To encourage the pupil to think creatively and analytically about himself and the world by observing language in action through prose, plays, poetry and discussion ...' - and so on through the other types of aims, with the final caution that we must note the danger that 'by concentrating solely upon the specifics we lose sight of the reasons for or value of what we are doing'.

The formative assessment of course work has therefore the triple aim of (a) improving particular skills, (b) showing pupils that language use takes many forms according to its purposes and that these forms need to be understood and practised and (c) subserving wider educational goals.

5.1.5 The importance of aural/oral assessment

Many schools are having problems in this area. At the same time increased stress is being put on efficiency in speaking and listening. On the one hand it is not very helpful to say flatly that these skills cannot be assessed; on the other it is risky to say that by such and such procedures we have effectively assessed the oral skill X and the aural skill Y. In 5.4 and 5.5 below, we list some examples and make tentative suggestions. All we wish to emphasise here is that these areas, neglected in the past, now deserve sustained professional attention, both analytical and experimental.[1] If one of the wider educational goals alluded to above is to equip pupils for their role in a democratic society, effective speech and discriminating listening are surely vital. Formative assessment in these areas should not merely record attainment, difficult as that may be, but it should promote progress, challenging as that may be.

5.1.6 The place of criterion-referenced procedures

Most of us at the mention of criterion-referencing think of it as a testing procedure. Many people think it important to distinguish between criterion-referenced testing and older norm-referenced testing. The difference is quite simple. With norm-referenced testing of the kind we presently employ for the final award of O-Grades and Highers, we are essentially deciding on what constitutes a reasonable level of achievement (called The Pass) and thereafter spreading out the candidates on a numerical distribution of 10/20/40/20/10, representing achievement at A, B, C, D, and E range respectively. For the most part, therefore, candidates are competing against each other to get into one or other of these ranges and the number entering each range is predetermined. Criterion-referenced testing on the other hand has no such pre-determination of the numbers achieving entry into a mark range. It sets out the fairly precise criterion for each of several levels of achievement (say A to E) and the candidates responses are matched to one of these. That is the grade he gets irrespective of how many others also achieve it. It is worth noting in passing that within the procedures for O-Grade and Higher English the mark for composition is arrived at from just such a procedure, the eventual numerical score being arrived at by assigning the pupils' work in the first place to categories for which criteria are given to the markers.

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[1] A major step in this direction has now been provided. D NORTHCROFT in HearSay, published by SCDS for the CCC.

What has all this to do with a chapter on formative assessment? The propounders of the virtues of criterion-referencing argue that it has considerable value in teaching (as against testing) because it can be used for formative and diagnostic purposes. These are important claims and we need to look at them.

There is no doubt that a criterion-referenced approach has considerable value in formative assessment. This is because, in setting out the criteria by which a pupil's response may be assessed summatively, it lets the pupil see clearly what is wanted and allows both him and his teacher to gauge how well he is reaching the standard required; and if he is not reaching it, where the deficiency lies.

To demonstrate by example: if we are trying to use a criterion-referenced approach to assess a pupil's composition, we would decide first of all under which headings by which to judge it. Patricia Gordon, for example, in her article in **Teaching English, Vol. 17, No. 3** lists the following as possible criteria: **Presentation, Mechanics of Writing, Transmission of Information, Structure/ Sequence, Ability to Interest/Ideas, Commitment to the Subject, Awareness of Audience.** There can be more or fewer or different criteria as we think appropriate for the subjects offered and the age-grade being assessed. Under each criterion we may or may not want to sub-categorise so that, for example, **Structure/Sequence** could have such sub-categories as **Organisation of Thought, Explaining/Expanding, Appropriate Length.** What is vital is that different standards of performance need to be established against which the pupils' work can be judged. Thus a range of four categories may be devised for **Structure/Sequence** (using but slightly modifying Ms Gordon's original):

(i) There will be some overall coherence in that ideas/thoughts will bear relationship to one another. There is likely to be unintentional interruption of thought and signs of illogicality but these will not interfere with the overall impression of ideas being related.

(ii) There will be evidence of points/ideas/events following each other though linking may be absent or weak.

(iii) There will be clear overall structure - a beginning, a middle and an end.

(iv) Ideas/events/thoughts will be linked and will develop logically. Elements in the writing will receive a conscious and controlled development.

Such criteria allow both pupil and teacher a clear sight of what may be attempted given the pupil's present skills and may even encourage the pupil to be ambitious about what he will attempt. Again, it many encourage concentration on a particular aspect of a pupil's writing which at that time needs development. And similarly with the other modes: the establishment of a criterion-referenced approach has benefits for the teaching of the skills.

There is also a claim that criterion-referenced approaches assist diagnosis of a pupil's learning difficulties. This is true only to a limited extent, which may become clearer if we use the analogy of medicine. If we have a pain, the doctor's preliminary examination may establish where the trouble lies: that we have, say, a kidney complaint rather than, say, tonsillitis. But most likely it will take the use of X-rays and samples and perhaps more expert judgment to pinpoint the cause of the trouble and to remedy it. The criterion-referenced approach, by categorising different levels of achievement and therefore pointing to where the trouble lies in an under-achiever, is like the doctor. But that is the limit: to establish the cause of the problem may well take a long and patient examination by the teacher of the behaviour, stance and mental strategies of the pupil as he attempts the task.

Before we leave criterion-referencing we should be clear that there is an element of norm-referencing in criterion-referenced assessment since the criteria have to be derived from a shared view of what the different levels of achievement are at a particular age. This is particularly evident also when criterion-referencing is used as the basis for "mastery learning". In the area of Language and Literature, the only aspects capable of being assessed as "mastery learning" are those where knowledge can play the most significant part; for example the ability to perceive metaphor and simile; the understanding of metre and rhythm; the recognition of rhetorical devices like imperatives, questions, etc.; a grasp of what characters in literature say and do; the extension of vocabulary; knowledge of certain aspects of punctuation and grammar. To test the pupil's knowledge in such areas, to a point where we can be satisfied that he has mastered them, many items will be set for the pupil. But to achieve mastery, it is not usually necessary to get them all right: a subjective judgment must be made about how difficult the test items should be and how many right answers are required (say 80%) for mastery. And on what basis is this judgment made? Generally on the examiners' experience of what pupils and different ages and abilities can be expected to achieve.

5.1.7 The encouragement of self assessment and peer group assessment

Traditionally, teachers handed out work, pupils handed in work and teachers marked it. Their verdict was as final as that of a court of law: there were very few appeals. The mark, often out of 20 but rarely 20, carried a magisterial authority which cheered the higher scorers but inculcated in the rest a sense that they were doomed. The situation was unpropitious for attempts at self-assessment: Sir must be right and all those blemishes highlighted in red were the stigmata of failure. Today the emphasis is different. Sir has come down from the dais and his attitude is often: There are good things in this composition but there are weaknesses and I'd like you to try to list them: or: Which do you think is the best paragraph in your story? or: If you were giving that talk again which examples would you keep, which miss out and which new ones introduce? or: We've all been listening to a news report because we're all (yes, me too) going to write down the thoughts of a sailor or airman in the battle - what points should we have been jotting down as we listened?

If we can convey to pupils that their own critical appraisal of their work is as important as the teacher's we shall have laid a very useful foundation stone. Analogies from other fields of activity - craft, sport, gardening etc. - may help pupils appreciate the value of self-assessment, which of course includes an awareness of achievement, not just of difficulty. There is satisfaction in knowing one has a skill, whether it can be in a striking well designed poster or a well told Billy Connolly style anecdote.

Similarly, peer-group assessment reminds everyone that the teacher is not the sole arbiter of performance. A valuable unit of work is that where discussion of a theme is generated by a short story (e.g. the theme of ownership in the story Spit Nolan) and the class divides into groups each of which acts out, after discussion, a simple situation to illustrate the theme from a new viewpoint. Then the audience comments on each performance, the teacher eliciting simple criteria of evaluation as the unit proceeds. At a future date the criteria will be recalled and a similar peer group assessment arranged. Pupils can also assess each other's written work, with comments, or the teacher may exhibit (anonymous) work from another class by overhead projector for class comment, perhaps issuing a photocopy of the same piece for subsequent marking and correction by the pupils.

5.2 WRITING

5.2.1 Problems

The word "sparkle" can be a source of amusement to English teachers. It is one of the "qualities" that markers look for in good writing. Yet beneath the amusement lie two very deep problems. One is the whole question of the subjective marking of written English: sparkle sometimes seems to lie in the eye of the beholder. The other is the nature of the written tasks pupils are asked to do: is sparkle, assuming pupils can produce it and teachers spot it, always appropriate? Do we want it in, say a letter to a zoo requesting information on what animals are on view? In fact, we are back into the areas of criteria, reliability and validity. What things should we teach and how should we assess them? What are the purposes of writing?

"In spite of our best intentions", Sydney Smyth reminds us, "we find the detail of the test procedures creeping back into our teaching. How much writing from S1 onwards consists of short bursts of 'essay' writing to cover two/ three pages".[1] Hence the importance of mapping out criteria of achievement in terms both of the modes in which we hope S1/S2 pupils write and the skills required for them. And related to both modes and skills is the basic concept of purpose.

THAT WEE REPTILE, GILROY IN THREE - B, JUST WROTE IT UP THERE WITH A CREAM BUN!
SUCH ORIGINALITY, EH?

Sparkle

This is all very well in theory, the English teacher might say, but how does it relate to good practice? Is not the growth of writing skills a subtle process and the teacher´s evaluation of them intuitive? Won´t this process be stultified by the application of the parameters, grids, call them what you will, of assessment criteria? Will the good gardener be for ever measuring the growth of root and shoot of his plants?

Another worry about the assessment of writing is that it may be demotivational. We do not "assess" the baby learning to walk; why undermine the confidence of children learning to write? Andrew Stibbs (1979, pp 11 - 14) gives an illuminating example of a pupil´s story, "Lost in the Fog", with good qualities of tone, feeling and shape, marked penally at 5/20 and inscribed with remarks like "Avoid slang", "Avoid these careless errors", "Not a sentence" and the final comment: "Far too many careless errors of spelling and punctuation. You must keep closer to the essay title and write about the fog". Stibbs suggests that this assessment/correction is too narrowly based:

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1. Teaching English, 1976. vol 9, no 2.

> "How helpful is the mark '5/20', when it is not explained what the five marks were gained for and the fifteen lost for, nor how the writer could improve his writing sufficiently to earn '6/20' or '20/20'? to conclude, the teacher has focussed his whole attention on observable surface features which he assesses as right or wrong; and on the basis of those has come to an assessment of the qualities of the whole piece." (p 16)

5.2.2 Helping the pupil

Gordon Liddell [1] makes a similar point by considering three teacher responses to a "letter" written by a pupil who after reading Ray Bradbury's The Pedestrian has to write a complaint about the robot-controlled world of the story. The first teacher response is a series of angry remarks (the "Evil Wizard" approach), the second is the encouraging but vague and anodyne (the "Fairy Godmother" approach) and the third is also encouraging but points the pupil in the direction of improvement. It will be seen, however, that in these examples the assessment procedure is not being abandoned but refined. Stibbs is saying that assessment based on surface features of language may be invalid; Liddell that assessment should be selectively related to the learner and his problems. Such points are particularly important when we are dealing with formative assessment which Liddell describes as "just good teaching, the kind we need to do when a pupil has written something and it's our job to help him improve it to the best of his ability. It is about what we say to the pupil, how we approach his script, and what we encourage him to do with it next".

It has to be admitted that the degree of reliability of such assessment is not readily quantifiable. Its validity will depend on the teacher's concept of what he is assessing: it could and should be high, even though it takes the form of a comment rather than a mark, since the teacher will have in mind certain criteria of performance which are not in turn related to the purposes of the writing. While a mark may not be meaningless, as is sometimes stated, it can hardly be formative, while the following comments, all from second year jotters, are:

> "Good - a vivid description. You could include some sounds".
>
> "Would you think this to yourself? Some good thoughts, but too formal. Would you really think in such a grammatical form? Your tone should be more conversational".
>
> "You haven't really thought about colours, feelings and vivid adjectives. You have not worked your way through the plan".

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[1] Teaching English, 1982. vol 15, no 2, pp 4 - 10.

"Good idea to use questions for the story opening. They make the reader want to go on to find the answer".

5.2.3 The notion of purpose

Implicit in all these is the notion of purpose-related criteria. Some might find the second and third comments too negative, with the analogy in mind of the baby learning to walk: we don't scold it when it stumbles but encourage it when it succeeds. This formulation by Ernest Spencer[1] seeks to avoid this danger:

Three questions:

Give the purpose and readership of this writing:

(1) What has the pupil successfully done?

(2) What has the pupil attempted (however weakly)?

(3) What can I suggest was needed but does not seem to have occurred to the pupil? Should I?

Corresponding assessment comments to the pupil:

(1) You did this well ....

(2) You were right to try this. We'll talk about it ....

(3) You might have tried this. We'll talk about it ....

Nonetheless, "negative" comments have their place. If pupils want to do well they won't mind being told where they are doing badly so long as the general aim is constructive. The girl learning the butterfly stroke will be ready to learn where her technique is faulty. Even the baby learning to walk has an adult model in mind. And even the pupil eager for a "mark", though we might not give him one, is really wanting to know how well he is doing.

5.2.4 Redrafting

A crucial aspect of the formative assessment of writing is redrafting. It is normal practice in everyday life to review and recast our writing. We may ask a friend or spouse to look over something we have written; or we may return to it ourselves with a critical eye. The process will involve, implicitly or explicitly, an awareness of criteria, whether relating to mechanical accuracy, layout, tone, or whatever. The same scrutinizing process should apply to our pupils' written work, whether destined for a folder, the classroom wall, class or school newspaper or magazine. Pupils can learn to look at their own and each other's work with a critical eye, to articulate the criteria by which they judge, to suggest improvements and to produce the best work of which they are capable. Pupils should occasionally be asked to grade their own work, again with reference to agreed criteria.

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[1] SPENCER, E. The place of assessment in teaching writing. SCOLA Conference, March 1982.

5.2.5 Documentation

It is misleading to think of formative assessment as a haphazard or ad hoc affair. However much freedom the class teacher has to shape his own courses he will need to think in terms of the now popular PIE model - Planning, Implementation, Evaluation. Such a model implies a range of documentation. We have suggested above (3.2) that paperwork should be reduced to a minimum; nevertheless, principal teachers should consider how many of the following are essential to the formative assessment of writing (1, 2 and 3 concern planning; 5 and 6 evaluation).

5.2.5.1 Checklist of writing activities

This is a matter of teaching rather than assessment, it might be said. But such a view obscures the link between curricular design and formative assessment. The pupil must acquire a sense of what a particular mode of writing implies in terms of layout, sentence structure, tone and register. He must cultivate what F L Lucas calls "courtesy" toward the reader. The teacher must move him towards this goal by indicating what he can do and cannot yet do. A typical departmental list of writing modes is as follows:

Account of personal experience
Short story - setting, characterisation, dialogue etc.
Personal interest essay
Personal letter
Playscript - Interview script
Simple instructions
Brief statement of opinion for or against a point of view
Brief account of reading/viewing
Description of people and places
Redrafting of all of these
Newspaper report)
Poetry writing) optional activities
Business letter - second year

Another school might produce a different kind of list (includ-ing perhaps more specific types of story - Horror, Animal, For Young Children - telegrams, Diaries, radio script etc.) but the modes listed above do between them require a large spectrum of writing skills and techniques. They occupy many points along Britton's "continuum" of writing categories; "Transactional"<->"Expressive"<->"Poetic" - and within his two "modes of use" - "Language in the role of the Participant" and "Language in the Role of the Spectator" on which the categories are "superimposed".[1] Another point to note is that most of the items in the list suggest or permit criteria which the pupil himself can appreciate. For example, the effectiveness of the "setting" of a short story can be judged by asking what details a reader will remember and what they had to do with the characters in the action. "Simple instructions" can be tested pragmatically. A "newspaper report" can be compared with authentic models and will need to satisfy the class "editorial board". "It should be easy, but it is not", (C C Lamont, 1981, p 2) reminds us, "to think of assessment in terms of the individual´s development of his use of language, a use that is uniquely his, a use that is mostly answerable to criteria which he sets for himself according to previous performance".

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[1] DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND EDUCATION. A language for life, 1975, p 165.

"TAXONOMY"! HE SAID "TAXONOMY" OUT LOUD!
HE MUST BE AN INMATE OF MORON HOUSE "COLLEGE" HE WILL GIVE US OUT PRINTED COPIES OF WHAT HE WANTS TO SAY AND THEN READ THEM OUT LOUD TO US !
THE
FAMILY DOCTOR
LARGE PRINT

Horror

This reminds us again of the importance of peer group assessment as part of the formative process. If a "personal interest" essay is to be included in a class magazine the writer´s peers have the right to assess it and the obligation, with the teacher´s help, to arrive at criteria for doing so. It is amusing how readily children can identify mechanical and stylistic faults in their classmates´ writing and yet be blind to these flaws in their own work.

5.2.5.2 Notes on the range of writing purposes

Some teachers find Britton´s categorisation of writing purposes inadequate, and debate will no doubt continue in this area. A central problem is what Ernest Spencer calls the "school-boundedness" of most written work[1]. Spencer feels that

> "the pupil´s awareness that he has to satisfy the teacher (fully or barely) pervades all his attempts to achieve the apparent purposes of each particular task. This does not mean that these other purposes are not significant: it is quite possible for the pupils to

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[1] SPENCER, E. A categorisation of school writing, 1981.

> become deeply involved in trying to achieve them, and they may be educationally important because they challenge pupils and stretch resources. The pupils however, are either engaging in 'school-bound' simulations or practices for some future writing demand in adult life or in the SCE examination, they are doing a kind of thinking and writing e.g. of the 'self-exploratory kind' - which, for most people, is demanded and occurs only in the school.
>
> Since the vast majority of pupils write only in their role as 'pupil' and in response to demands made by teachers, it makes sense, in describing and assessing school writing, to start with the purposes for which teachers set it and the qualities they expect in work which achieves these purposes".

Spencer's detailed categorisation is given in Appendix 3. His list of writing purposes is based on a survey of writing across the curriculum[1], an area outwith the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, it is important that teachers give thought to this concept of purpose in writing so that their own skill as formative assessors may be refined.

5.2.5.3 List of frameworks for written work

These concern teaching strategies rather than assessment as such, and much useful work has been done in recent years on topics and projects. It is worth noting here, however, that a good topic will involve the pupil in a wide range of writing tasks, so that the teacher's evaluation can be based on a wide spectrum of activities. As noted above, the tasks need not all be of the "essay" type: there might be a case for including such items as flow diagrams, advertisements, horoscopes, rules, definitions, news flashes, posters, book jackets and a host of others. One of our aims is to get children excited by the variety and potential of our language. Again, we hope that pupils will see that the purpose of writing determines the skills they need to develop.

Though many of the writing situations have to be "contrived", as we admitted earlier, this does not prevent the teacher from engineering some "real" situations. If a story is to be written it is good to have actual readers or listeners to receive it: perhaps another class, in a local primary school; if work is done on formal letters, why not address one to a real recipient who will duly respond? In these cases the writers would have a strong motivation towards self-assessment.

5.2.5.4 Samples of pupils' written work with comments

It is useful for an English Department to have on file samples of pupils' work.

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[1] SPENCER, E. Writing matters across the curriculum, 1983.

(i) Some departments receive from the feeder primaries a selection of written work by each pupil, usually with teachers comments. This is a useful guide as to the stage a pupil is at and assists the secondary English teacher in evaluating subsequent work in a formative, motivational way.

(ii) A collection of pupils´ work, including redrafting, together with teachers´ scores and comments is a useful part of the departmental resource material, especially for young teachers.

(iii) Similarly an occasional multiple-marking-by-impression exercise should be carried out on a specific task attempted by a whole class and the results filed for staff to refer to. It will be helpful if, attached to the exercise, an analysis of the qualities/features in the writing expected and achieved or not achieved is given.

(iv) Pupils can also be helped by seeing examples (on the wall or in folders) of their classmates or other pupils´ work with comments and/or scores plus redrafts also with comments/scores. There is a case for using sample work, either duplicated or shown by overhead projector, as lesson material. Allied to this is the practice of letting the pupils assess each other´s work, preferably by reference to criteria they themselves have worked out. Again, before attempting to write, say, an account of a court case pupils can take a specimen from a newspaper, identify the features or criteria in the specimen, write their own account and submit the result to classmates for assessment.

5.2.5.5 Pupil´s work record

As suggested in 2.3 above, a record or chart of work completed is helpful to the pupil. (See Appendix 1).

5.3 READING

5.3.1 Problems

Like listening, reading is a complex internal process. We can only assess it by considering some consequential activity, usually writing, speaking or doing. We tend to assume that measuring the activity gives a valid assessment of the reading process. Yet if we think about examples of these three consequential activities we soon perceive problems in the assessment area.

(i) A written comprehension test is a common method of assessing reading skill but it is not certain that it is always a valid one. As Stibbs (1979, p 42) points out:

> "In answers to conventional comprehension exercises it is difficult to disentangle the respective contributions of understanding, lower order ability at reading the passage, skills at

writing answers to the questions, and knowledge of the often arbitrary rules of the question and answer game".

(ii) A spoken response to a reading passage can take many different forms. At one extreme it could be a word reading test (e.g. Schonell); at the other a comment on the style of a poem. In the first case the test might offer useful diagnostic help for a pupil with reading problems but it might not reveal the perhaps limited reading skills the pupil does possess. (See Starting Out with Slower Learners, SCDS, 1978, Section 1: Testing and Readability). In the latter case - responding to a poem - though a complex reading skill may be under assessment, we must proceed in an informal manner and our comments, to be of use to the pupil, must be descriptive rather than numerical. And the problems of validity are magnified by the subjective nature of any comment on the style of any poem.

(iii) If we require a pupil to do something to show he has properly read a passage we may be able to set up a reliable test (e.g. following instructions on how to operate a flash-gun) but its validity as a reading test may be limited: it may be testing manual dexterity, spatial reasoning, knowledge of similar operations etc. And failure in the practical test may not prove a failure in reading.

In short, the more complex the reading skills we wish to assess the more difficult is the task of assessment. And here we are faced with another difficulty: though reading is classed as a "receptive" skill, it is by no means a passive one. Efficient reading depends as much on the input from the reader as on the output from the writer. It is not just a decoding process.

Yet clearly we wish our pupils to acquire a wide range of reading skills and we have therefore an obligation to assess progress, however complex the task.

5.3.2 Reading skills

What are these reading skills? One well-known attempt to categorise them is the "Barrett Taxonomy" which we recommend to English Departments as a guide to possible reading activities and their assessment. This taxonomy presents reading skills in a hierarchical arrangement suggesting different degrees of reading maturity and a movement from "lower" to "higher" order reading skills. The Open University Course editors, who include the taxonomy in their Reading Course, point out however that from quite early stages many of these skills are required simultaneously. Thus the simplest form of comprehension requires a certain degree of inference or at least experiential input, as noted above, while an interpretation exercise implies an element of evaluation, if only at the level of weighing alternatives. In assessing any reading skill, therefore, the teacher should be aware of the interrelatedness of the various skills.

5.3.3 Reading purposes

As with writing, success in reading must relate to purposes. Much of the reading done by pupils is "school-bound" in purpose: it is done for the teacher. This is legitimate so long as we are clear that this type of reading is developmental rather than immediately functional. It affords practice in word attack skills, deriving meaning from context, inference, understanding of structure, evaluation, etc.; and assessment of these skills is necessary and valuable. One drawback, however, is that assessment may take over: the traditional interpretation exercise tests rather than teaches. Another is that the assessment of reading skills may be lost in a welter of small scale exercises in vocabulary, etc. We do not read interpretation passages in adult life. We may read articles and reports but we usually ask the questions before we read; have a genuine purpose in mind and relate the parts to the whole.

In additional to developmental reading, therefore, pupils should read a variety of authentic materials: poetry and fiction, of course; newspapers and comics (yes!); directions, advertisements, forms, charts, tables, diagrams, etc. The last three items are important: in the world of semiotics we inhabit, the reading of graphs and symbols is a prime life-skill; indeed graphicacy, in both its productive and its interpretative aspects, is now competing to join the trinity of literacy, numeracy and oracy. In terms of assessment, particularly in a criterion-referenced situation, it is useful to know if a pupil can follow a recipe, understand a guarantee, consult an enyclopedia or read a diagram.

Need to have Graphicacy

5.3.4 Reading aloud

It is argued that few of us read aloud in adult life so we need not ask pupils to do so in class. This seems a narrow view. Again it depends on purpose. If the intention is to entertain or convey appreciation there is a case for pupils reading aloud and being assessed, perhaps with the help of fellow pupils, on the performance. In fact the pupils might be asked to discuss whether it is a useful activity, and is so, whether and how it should be assessed. For much work in English, silent reading is the appropriate mode.

5.3.5 Documentation

As with other modes of English, good documentation is an aid to good teaching and assessment. As we noted above, checklists and categorisations, however sophisticated, will not "cover" all that is good in English teaching. Indeed the danger is that in seeming to do so they may inhibit new thinking and creativity. Nevertheless, it is helpful, especially to young teachers, to have quick access to, as it were, a stockpile of accumulated wisdom. Some or all of the following might be judged necessary:

5.3.5.1 Checklist of reading skills, with simple criteria of achievement

We give in Appendix 4 one school´s notes on reading skills suitable for S1/S2, to be used as a basis for pupil profiles. Criteria of achievement are included. However difficult, given the fact that pupils sometimes fail to achieve what they have managed the week before, the writing of such descriptions is a valuable departmental activity.

5.3.5.2 Notes on reading purposes

This could be combined with the reading skills checklist mentioned above, or it could take the form of a list of reading activities which S1/S2 pupils should be able to tackle, with particular reference to authentic materials. These materials could be linked with a study skills or problem solving approach, possibly using workcards, so that limited objectives can be taught and their achievement assessed. For example, the problem might be devising a two-day entertainment programme for an overseas visitor to Scotland (which would involve reading brochures, maps and guides etc.).

5.3.5.3 Frameworks for reading activities

It may be useful, as with writing activities, to list topics, projects, units or other frameworks with a distinct reading component which will attract a comment, grade or other form of assessment.

5.3.5.4 Pupil´s Work Record

In addition to the Work Record (see 2.3 above), pupils should be encouraged to keep a Reading Log. It should list the books or other materials he has read individually and give space for his comments on these.

5.3.6 Suggestions

We may now state some guidance points emerging from the material surveyed:

(a) We must be ready to use a wide variety of materials in the teaching and assessment of reading. The spectrum could range through standardised reading tests, cloze, sequencing, prediction and completion tests, doing or making things according to instructions, talks about books read, library quiz cards, group editorial consultations on materials submitted for newspapers or radio programmes, skimming and scanning assignments, book reviews, personal poetry anthologies or diaries, imaginative extensions to poems and stories, and many more.

(b) Assessment should be geared to the level of development of the pupil and not restricted to blanket interpretation tests for the whole class. This may mean departmental discussion and consensus on techniques for estimating readability.

(c) The reading of literature must remain central. We hope that our pupils will move towards the state of mind described by W Jackson[1]:

> "Fiction ... helps the child towards self-awareness and self-esteem; an awareness of himself in time and space; a sympathetic understanding of others in society; a sense of a structuralised whole, a myth against which reality may be tested. Man's weakness, and yet his strength, is that he is always faced with the necessity for choice; legend, myth, fable, story, vividly present the child with the nature of these choices and help in the making of them. They answer: "What am I?" and "What ought I to do?"."

To assess the degree of such self-awareness attained by the child requires some fine tuning on the part of the teacher.

5.4 SPEAKING

5.4.1 Problems

Problems in assessing oral competence range from the logistical to the psycholinguistic. A class of thirty pupils can read or write but not, conveniently, speak at once. Even in individual situations, the pupil may feel threatened by any assessment of a mode of communication which seems to expose personality.

There is also the problem of the relationship between speaking and listening. The two often occur together as a dynamic, interactive process, whereas reading and writing are solitary. The listener's response may shape the speaker's speech and indeed serve as an assesssment of it; the reader's response to the writer is not analogous.

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[1] Jackson, W. Unpublished paper.

Yet given the current emphasis on these areas in S3 and S4 it is surely important to make pupils aware that there are identifiable skills in speech and listening and that these can be practised and improved. As with reading and writing there should be a written record available to pupils showing the teacher's estimate of their progress. Validity of assessment will be refined if the various purposes of speaking are kept in mind. Self and peer group assessment should also play a definite part.

5.4.2 Categories of skills and activities

As with any assessment, the teacher should attempt to list criteria by which his judgments are made. Such categorisations will vary: the important thing is that they compel us to articulate what may be vague notions of what we are trying to teach and assess. An agreed departmental list can be a useful pooling of experience and insights.

Lists of criteria may exist at different levels of generality. In Pupils in Profile (Scottish Council for Research in Education, 1977) the four most important factors in speaking skills are seen as:

(i) Cogency - the correspondence between a pupil's ideas and how clearly they are expressed.

(ii) Technical skill - fluency, audibility, diction, etc.

(iii) Voluntariness - how readily a pupil will use speech.

(iv) Content - how relevant and useful his speaking is.

Such concepts have to be translated into specific activities (this is the criterion-referenced approach). For example, can a pupil effectively

- direct a tourist to the nearest post office?

- give advice to her friend on her boyfriend problem?

- ask parents' permission to stay out late?

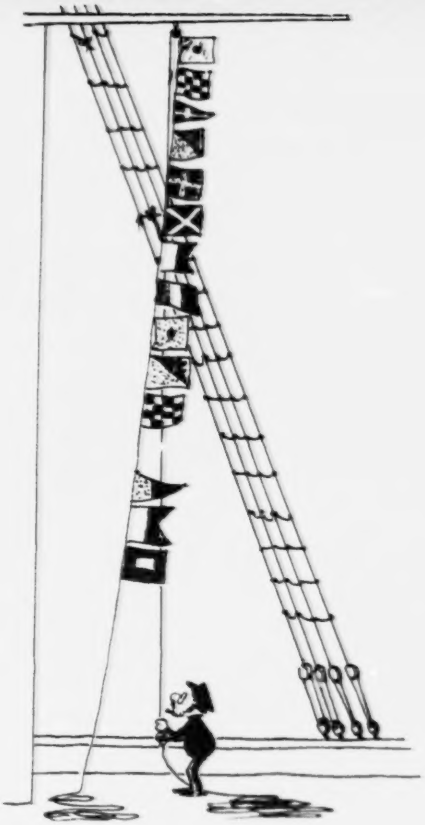
- tell an amusing anecdote to the family at tea-time?

5.4.3 Speaking with a purpose

It is useful here to survey some oral classroom activities and note how formative assessment relates to purpose. Needless to say, listening is an integral part of each activity.

5.4.3.1 Attentive listening and oral paraphrasing

It is illuminating here to look at one activity in some detail.



Information gap

The example chosen (Appendix 6) uses the concept of the "information gap", i.e. the need for the speaker to transmit and the listener to receive a particular message usually of a practical kind. In this case the lesson format compels speaker, listener and observer to exercise the relevant purpose-related skills to the best of their ability. Both self and peer-group assessment are involved. Though informal, the assessment can be reasonably valid. The observer is assessing whether the listener has (a) changed and/or (b) omitted important parts of the message. When the teacher becomes the observer he uses more sophisticated criteria which should reinforce the validity of his assessment. The confident teacher will discuss these criteria with the class.

5.4.3.2 Simulations

The purpose of speaking here is to provide a context for speaking or to practise registers appropriate to certain structured or formal situations. The role play element often provides a persona for the reticent pupil. Typical examples would be conducting an interview or making a complaint. A more complex situation would be a general election meeting or a mock trial (both can be entertaining and educative but, unless set up carefully, disorderly and self-defeating). An interesting package of games and simulations, ranging from a shipwreck to a teaching post application is Nine Graded Simulations, published by Management Games Ltd. A debate, with rules of procedure discussed and agreed beforehand, is a demanding but rewarding oral activity which allows the main speakers to shape their speeches in advance bearing in mind the criteria of relevance, cogency and appropriateness of register. All these activities can be followed by class evaluations where the criteria for success are established. The teacher will also be making his own written or mental notes on individual performances. Just as redrafting is important in improving written work, so second or parallel performances will help pupils gain confidence and understand the demands of the skill being practised.

5.4.3.3 Discussions

It may be that in adult life our aim in taking part in a discussion is to project a certain image of ourselves, boost our ego, compete with another member of the group, etc. These purposes may inform classroom discussions to some degree, but there are others. The crucial question, says Brian Boyd[1], after transcribing a lively discussion in S1,

> "is whether group discussion really leads to genuine learning and understanding. This seems to be obvious, even from the short transcribed extracts. If learning involves perceiving relationships, accepting the opinions and views of others, reaching conclusions, getting things done etc., then it certainly takes place. It takes place in small groups, just as it takes place in whole class discussions."

In addition to "genuine learning and understanding", another purpose in discussion work will be to identify and practise discussion skills themselves. It will often be helpful for the teacher, acting as chairperson, to have a fairly precise idea of what kind of learning and which particular discussion[2] skills he hopes will be enhanced by any particular discussion. An example may help.

As part of a unit of work, perhaps including a mock trial and a visit to a lawcourt, the teacher might initiate a discussion on punishment. There might be quite a lively discussion, eliciting hilarious accounts of what pupils´ parents have done to them or vivid suggestions as to what they would do to rapists and other malefactors. The pupils might leave the room buzzing with further ideas and the teacher might assess his lesson as above average. If, however, he could overhear a pupil´s father asking that evening, "What did you learn today in English, Jim?" the reply might be disappointingly vague. In self defence the teacher might say that Jim could not be expected to articulate what he had gained from the lesson, that some things are caught rather than taught, that a structured discussion is a dead or artificial thing, etc. Nevertheless, unless the teacher takes the view that he is merely the creator of opportunities for learning, he will have certain aims and purposes in mind. If the "learning and understanding" centres on the idea of "making the punishment fit the crime" and how difficult this is in practice, he may brief the class before the lesson to come armed with examples of "crimes" or offences they might commit and suitable punishments for them. If the aim were the more ambitious one of formulating concepts from a multitude of examples (presumably a skill we would wish all pupils to acquire), in this case perhaps "deterrence" or "rehabilitation", then by the mere fact of having spelt out the goal to himself the teacher would be in a better position to assess whether that specific learning, within the context of an oral/aural situation, had been done. As to the aim of improving actual discussion skills - coming in to the discussion, referring to examples, politely disagreeing, requesting further information, etc. - both teacher and pupils would be helped by identifying these, perhaps after listening to tape recordings of various discussions, good and bad. With these criteria in mind the teacher would be better placed to make a valid comment on the pupil profile.

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[1] BOYD, B. Beginning group work in S1, SCDS Edinburgh Centre, 1979.

[2] See Unit 4 of M J Wallace´s Study skills in English, CUP, 1980.

5.4.3.4 Talk arising from a topic

A popular theme for project/topic work in S1/S2 is Animals and Man. Some oral activities arising from it might be as follows:

(a) Preliminary discussion with whole class on what might be included in the topic, any individual contributions pupils could make, possible visit to zoo etc.

Purpose of speaking: to overcome shyness in speaking before one's peers; to articulate individual experiences and ideas; to help shape a future project.

Assessment: the teacher makes a mental or (later) an informal written note on individual pupils' willingness to join in; their ability to move from a personal or anecdotal mode to a more generalising one; their sense of what is relevant; the pupils should be encouraged to make some comment on their classmates' contributions (are they audible, reasonably clear, helpful, pertinent, serious etc.) and by so doing take part in the formative assessment process. Thus a long tale about how Rusty, the family dog, fought and killed a huge rat, might evoke the comment "He's just showing off, sir!" at which the teacher by question and suggestion might lead the class to see that by the criterion of "ability to tell a good story" the contribution would be good but by the criterion of "relevant to the topic" it's not very helpful, though it could perhaps be made relevant.

(b) Group work based on a newspaper report of some anti-fox-hunting activists spraying disinfectant to confuse the hounds, accidentally blinding one. Each group has to decide whether they sympathise with the huntsmen or the protesters.

Purpose of speaking: to respond to the dynamics of the small group situation. If discussion is chaotic or scrappy does someone emerge as chairman?

Assessment: the teacher judges whether he has set up the activity in a promising way. Would separate-sex groups be better? Why? If chairmen are chosen by the teacher or the groups have they some idea of the chairman's role and function? Should they be provided with models of this from radio/TV? The pupils judge whether opposing viewpoints have been fairly stated.

(c) Prepare a radio programme on Animals in Captivity.

Purposes of speaking: the script, when spoken, must be comprehensible to an audience who cannot see the speakers.

Assessment: the teacher may decide to let the programme planners have a first shot at their task without much help. He notes the strengths and weaknesses of the participants in terms of register and delivery. The pupils are asked to comment and might be brought round to thinking about criteria, given the purpose of the speaking activity: Are the voices clear, varied in pitch and intonation? Is the speed of delivery suitable to the task in hand? Are the sentences simple in structure? Are there plenty of examples? Is it clear who is speaking?

(d) Reading aloud a poem or extract

Purposes of speaking: to entertain, inform, amuse or involve the listeners.

Assessment: the teacher might make his own note on the strengths and weaknesses of this performance, making sure that every pupil has a chance to read aloud at some point. The reluctant or less able might be asked to tape record their pieces to gain extra practice. The pupils, given a sympathetic and constructive classroom situation, could comment on choice of extract, clarity, "impact" and might even award scores on a simple scale.

5.4.3.5 Tape-recording

The taping of pupils' speech might seem to some teachers to bring in an "air of contrivance" or "an artificial restraint"[1]. Behind such a comment there may be a misconception, namely that the best classroom practice is somehow not "artificial". The truth is that the classroom situation is contrived: pupils do not expect to find there the same activities they find in life outside school. As Bullock concedes, the teacher "must devise situations in which the pupils will naturally adopt the kind of behaviour he wants to encourage"[2]. If pupils see that taping, whether of discussions or assignments, is a step to improving performance, they will accept it. If they can be moved away from the idea that speech, far from being a kind of unmanly blether, is a vital skill at school and after, if they can cease to be "guilty at the sound of their own voices"[3], so much the better. From an assessment point of view, tape-recording offers many benefits. It allows self and peer group assessment of oral work, especially of

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1. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE. A language for life, 1975, p 146.

2. ibid. p 145.

3. ELLIS, R J. The assessment of oral skills. Teaching English, 1981, vol 14, no 3.

(a) quality of voice, including clarity and pitch;

(b) degree of participation in discussions, including appropriateness of register and relevance;

(c) contributions to structured oral work, e.g. radio programmes of a news or magazine type, where the concept of "editing" and "redrafting" will itself involve discussion of criteria.

5.4.4 Documentation

As with reading and writing, there is a need for

(a) a checklist of activities, skills and criteria (see 5.4.2 above);

(b) tapes of pupil talk available for reference, exemplifying oral activities, together with brief notes on the success or otherwise of the talk;

(c) a record of pupil´s work (see 2.3);

(d) the profile which remains the core assessment document.

5.5 LISTENING

5.5.1 Problems

Perhaps the main problem in this area arises from the type of listening we often ask our pupils to do, namely to teacher talk.

The Bullock Report refers to research suggesting that the average teacher talks for about three quarters of class time, the pupils being thus subjected to considerable demands on listening and concentration. "Since much of this is purely passive its efficiency is limited. People listen best when they have to take some action upon the information they have received. Where they have the opportunity to reply or to participate through action their attention is stimulated." The type of assessment, therefore, which reproduces this passive situation is of limited value in a formative situation. Rather than writing answers to an aural comprehension test of a passage read aloud by the teacher, pupils might find it more stimulating to hear, say, part of a football commentary and then write a short piece, as for a newspaper, on the performance of one player. This could be assessed in terms of completeness and conformity to the original. Another problem concerns "end-product". As with reading, the result of listening is mental activity, which may or may not lead to some observable activity like writing, speaking, laughing, baking a cake, etc. An assessment of some of these resultant activities may be possible and desirable but we should remember that it is a second-stage process. Reliability in such assessment may be high (e.g. we could accurately score the number of errors made by a listener in tracing a route on a chart after hearing instructions) but validity is more complex: we may be assessing not the listening skill but a skill learnt elsewhere.

5.5.2 Listening and reading

We must not conclude from the above that listening and reading are wholly analogous, that is, parallel ways of receiving "messages". Listening involves memory and recall of a different order from reading; it is also usually interactive, whereas the reader is rarely able to shape the output of the writer.

5.5.3 Hearing and listening

It follows that a good listener has to develop powers of instant auditory discrimination not entirely parallel with the decoding process which is part of reading. Normally there is no time to backtrack on parts of the message. The sender of the message may conveniently repeat or rephrase his ideas or even suggest what is to come, but the listener cannot be sure of this and cannot glance ahead at the text. Any predictions he makes must be constantly under review even while his powers of memory and recall are at full stretch. His problems may be compounded in an informal situation where the direction of the discourse is determined by whim, dominance, unease and a whole host of psychosocial factors.

5.5.4 Listening activities and assessment

NO NO! NOT ANOTHER MYSTERY SOUND!
V.84

Mystery sounds on tape

Given the special characteristics of good listening outlined above, the teacher should introduce a wide spectrum of activities, including exercises in auditory discrimination and recall. Pupils are often pleased to discover the considerable skills they have already at identifying sounds on tape. Such "mystery sounds" provide a good lead-in to a topic on the whole question of hearing and listening, the problems of the deaf etc. The teacher might then move on to identifying the voices of classmates, perhaps disguised, or of public figures - singers, sportsmen, politicians etc. Listening to and interpreting speakers with various accents would also be useful. This is a real life skill and certainly one that can be improved, as teachers of overseas students can testify. Success in this type of listening, or ear training, can readily be assessed, though most teachers would wish to take a lighthearted rather than heavy-handed approach to it.

A further step would be listening involving recall, e.g. receiving a telephone call asking for information which had to be collected and phoned back, following instructions etc. Here the pupil has not only to hear the message, but retain it long enough to act upon it. In the same category we might put telling or re-telling jokes and anecdotes, and simple note taking.

Further along the spectrum would come the listening skills which are analogous to reading, that is those which involve not only selecting out and recalling the message but also processing it in a fairly complex way. This would include summarising pieces of discourse, understanding and evaluating arguments, developing ideas from heard materials, etc.

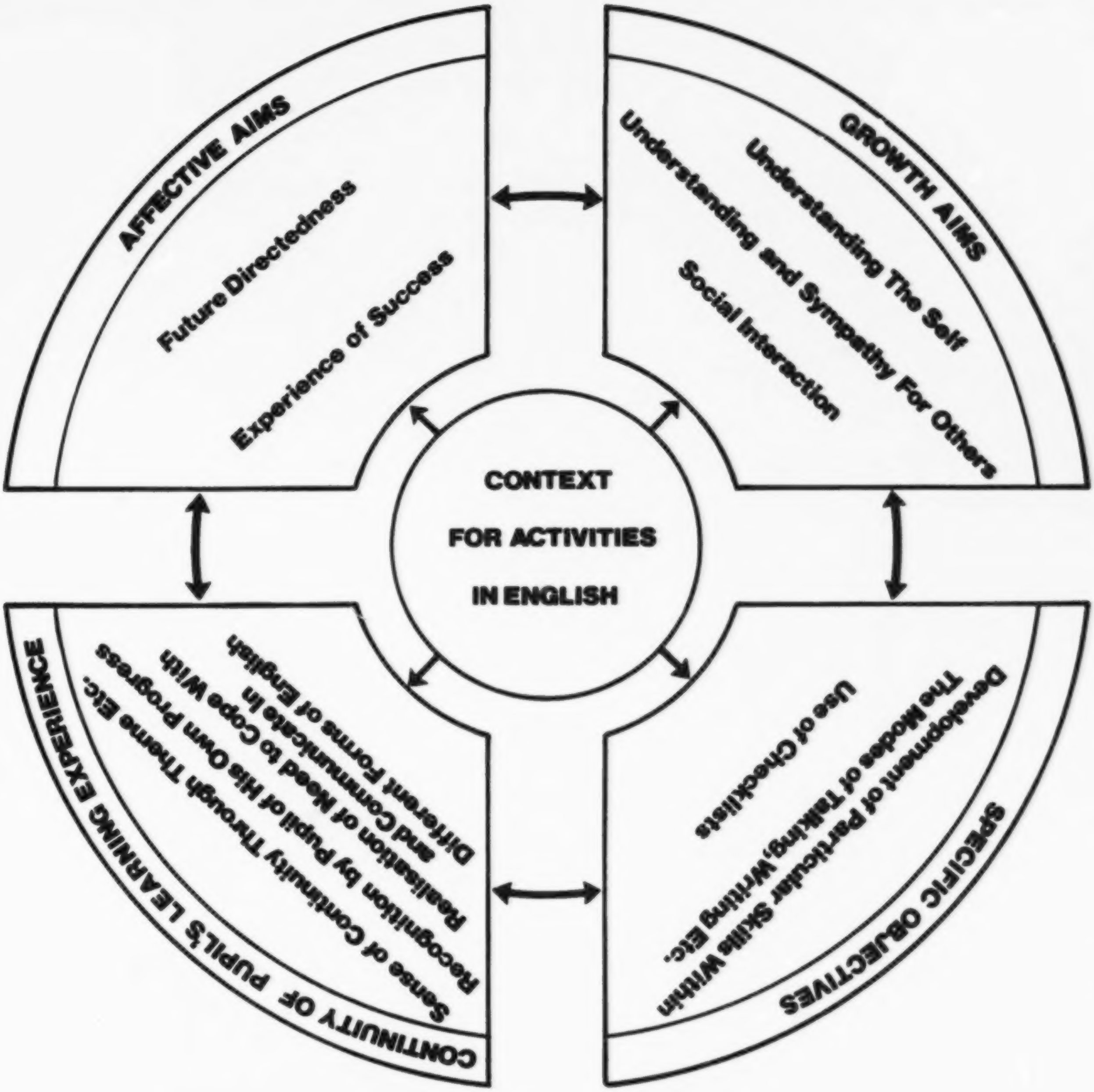
Lest the foregoing seem too utilitarian in purport, we must make a special plea for listening for enjoyment. This may involve any or all of the activities ranged along the spectrum, plus, often, an aesthetic or affective element. Perhaps we should listen to poetry and stories more and interpret them less. And while we can assess pupils understanding of such things we can scarcely measure their pleasure in them.

Where we do assess pupils listening activities and skills we should bear in mind the purpose of the listening when estimating success or failure.

5.5.5 Documentation

Departments should prepare lists of listening activities, with a rationale (not necessarily the one sketched above) to support them. Where listening and speech are seen as interactive classroom procedures, various situations should be listed. Where possible, purpose-related criteria of assessment should be noted. If aural comprehension tests are used, copies of these should be available with likely ranges of scores at various stages in S1 and S2. Where appropriate, listening activities should be included in the pupil´s Record of Work (see 2.3). The profile will also, of course, include an assessment of listening skills.

5.6 Clearly, formative assessment is a complex area. Some of the most important inter-meshing strands are suggested in the following model.


AFFECTIVE AIMS
Future Directedness
Experience of Success
GROWTH AIMS
Understanding The Self
Understanding and Sympathy For Others
Social Interaction
CONTEXT
FOR ACTIVITIES
IN ENGLISH
CONTINUITY OF PUPIL'S LEARNING EXPERIENCE
Sense of Continuity Through Theme Etc.
Recognition by Pupil of His Own Progress
Realisation of Need to Cope With and Communicate in Different Forms of English
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
Development of Particular Skills Within The Modes of Talking, Writing Etc.
Use of Checklists

CONSIDERATIONS INVOLVED FOR PUPIL AND TEACHER IN FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Section 6

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

6.1 COURSE WORK AND SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

6.1.1 The summative use of course work assessment

Formative assessment has been labelled "pedagogic", as opposed to summative, which is "classificatory". In practice the distinction between the two modes is not clear cut. The results of a summative test can be used to inform teaching and learning while scores derived from formative procedures may become part of a summative judgment. The criterion, according to Rowntree (1977, p 122) is "whether the teacher sees himself as getting to know the student better in order to teach him better or in order to help others feel better informed about him".

We have suggested that in S1 and S2 more emphasis should be put on formative assessment and less on summative; that a criterion-referenced philosophy should be preferred to a discriminatory one. Reports from schools indicate that such a shift is under way. Of course, summative assessment is still used for reporting and selection purposes, but the way it is arrived at is being modified. Some schools, for example, have abandoned examinations in S1/S2 and rely on the continuous or cumulative assessment of course work. Many schools retain examinations, at least at the end of S2, but others base their reports to parents and others on both course work, including folios, and examinations. Certainly the examination as the sole means of measuring achievement is an outmoded concept: assessment based on course work can be just as authoritative as examination assessment - indeed, unless the examination is carefully constructed, it may be more or so. Quite apart from questions validity and reliability, an examination may not have the motivational value that is ascribed to it. The 12 year old pupil, sitting his (perhaps) first examination in the December of his first term may find the experience traumatic and the results discouraging. And he may be setting up a self-fulfilling prophecy.

THERE I WAS, PROMOTED POST, NICE DEPARTMENT, JUST BEEN APPOINTED MARKER FOR THE O-GRADES, AND I READ PARAGRAPH FOUR, SUBSECTION NINE WHERE THEY QUOTE YOUNG COLIN LAMONT. THE BIT ABOUT "CHALLENGE THE EXTENT TO WHICH ASSESSMENT NEEDS TO BE DISCRIMINATORY AT ALL" SO I GAVE THEM ALL STRAIGHT HUNDRED PERCENTS, DELIGHTED, FAR BE IT FROM ME TO MAKE INVIDIOUS COMPARISONS AND SO FORTH. AND THE NEXT DAY THERE WAS THIS PHONE CALL TO MY HEEDIE. MY FOURTH YEAR CHILDREN TELL ME I HAVE TO ASK FOR SOMETHING CALLED U.8.40.
9
8

Summative assessment

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6.1.2 Weighting of summative assessment components

School policy will decide the relative emphasis to be put on course-based and exam-based assessment, and the weighting of individual components within these. The crucial question is: Does the combined assessment give a valid picture of the pupil's achievements over the term or year? If it fails to assess important areas of the course or conversely assesses areas not taught in the course, something is surely at fault.

6.2 EXAMINATIONS

6.2.1 The role of examinations

Some years ago "assessment" and "examinations" seemed almost synonymous terms in the minds of educators, pupils and parents. Now we think of school examinations as one manifestation of one type (summative) of assessment.

We must recognise however that examinations are a vital part of assessment procedures in many schools. Such schools give examinations high status and use examination results in making important decisions about pupils' progress through school. Examinations can have educational value both in themselves and in their effects. Good English examinations are educational because they oblige pupils to think and to convey their thoughts in language. It is possible to use examinations to stimulate a variety of types of language use about many different topics. But such aims will only be achieved if the scope and form of examinations are soundly based.

An examination might be a termly or yearly common test of all the pupils in S1 and S2 taken "under examination conditions" in the school hall, or it might be a class test of work covered during a term, or half a term, or at the end of a section of work to which it relates, taken equally "under examination conditions".

"Under examination conditions" means that each pupil is required to produce a personal unaided response to questions, usually in a given time although this does not rule out the possibility of types of examinations which allows pupils the opportunity of (a) research and discussion before sitting down to write their answers and (b) consultation of tests during the examination.

Regrettably, some school examinations bear little or no direct relationship to work pupils have been doing in class which is not directly derived from the examination format - such non-exam work is often not assessed at all.

Assessment and curriculum are inextricably interdependent, but decisions about what to teach should always procede decisions about how to assess achievement. The process of assessing, or cf examining, begins with course-planning, and the form of the examination should, as far as possible, be appropriate for the work actually carried out by the pupils. A good examination therefore, will almost certainly take a shape quite different from the traditional 'O' Grade pattern, especially in S1 and S2.

(There might, for example, be no choice in the Writing Paper and/or several short pieces of continuous writing may be demanded rather than one long "'O' Grade-type" composition).

6.2.2 Examinations: Validity

As with all forms of assessment, examinations should be devised to achieve maximum validity (see Section 3.4 above). This means paying attention to (a) examination design and (b) the framing of unambiguous questions. We will now look at these two points in detail.

6.2.2.1 Examination design

The basic planning strategy assumes that teachers of parallel S1 or S2 groups have agreed on general aims for the course but use different materials or approaches. They want an examination which is not just tacked on at the end of the course. The three basic elements of the strategy are:

(a) statement of general aims of course

(b) description of work done

(c) blueprint for examination, in the light of (a) and (b).

Appendices 6a and 6b illustrate this strategy. The strategy can be adapted to the situation: an element of sampling, i.e. selecting important and representative areas of the course work for testing, may be needed but this should be related to the aims for the course and to the work actually done.

6.2.2.2 Framing examination questions

(1) Bad questions, and how to avoid them

No matter what design of an examination, it can be invalidated by trivial, vague or ambiguous questions, or by questions posed in language beyond the understanding of some pupils. Most teachers will be able to recall instances of bad questions. Examples drawn from actual school examinations of comprehension or general reading include:

(a) The trivial vocabulary question:

"´Crouched behind the wall, Jan heard the footsteps draw near and, unable to restrain her panic, she screamed loudly´. Give another word or words for ´crouched´".

What is the point of a vocabulary question of this sort when there is no question about the main message of the sentence, her fear in a tense, dramatic situation?

(b) The vague request for "comment":
"Comment on the second sentence of paragraph two".

Will the mark be given if the pupil offers the comment "It is quite a long sentence"?

(c) **The ambiguously worded question:**

"Where might this passage have come from?"

Does the setter want an answer like, "The Sunday Post", or one like "The USA"?

(d) The ´technical language´ question:

"Give an account of the story, explaining why you enjoyed it: it should refer to the characters, the plot and any other features of special interest".

Could one be sure that all the S2 pupils who faced this question knew the meaning of ´plot´, ´characters´, ´refer´, ´features´, or even of that perennial in literature questions, ´account´? If not, the performance of some pupils on the test may have been determined, not by their response to thes story (which was what the question tried to test), but by their failure to understand certain items of technical vocabulary.

Even the common, traditional type of writing assignment has little to recommend it.

"Write a composition on one of the following:

A Day at the Fair (write a description, not a story)
Holidays
A Family Argument, etc."

This assignment provides no significant context or purpose for the work and seems to expect awareness of genres such as "description", when it is probably more fruitful for pupils to think in terms of achieving communicative purposes.

These strictures, in particular those on "vagueness" and on "difficult wording", might, of course, be less applicable in some circumstances. It might sometimes be reasonable to expect pupils to know what sort of comment to make or to be familiar with vocabulary which has been taught to them. It is, however, easy to overestimate what can reasonably be expected of pupils at any stage of schooling. We are not advocating easy learning aims for all, but we do advise the application of three principles in writing examination questions:

(i) Derive questions directly from the purposes of the course work, the achievement of which the examination is designed to test.

(ii) Keep the language of questions simple enough to ensure that all pupils can understand it, so that the test is always of the pupils´ response to a test or their ability to communicate in writing, rather than of their ability to comprehend technical vocabulary in the question.

SEE, I USED TO TEACH AWARENESS OF GENRES SUCH AS "DESCRIPTION" BUT THE S.C.C.E. TOLD ME THAT THE BAIRNS HAD TO THINK IN TERMS OF ACHIEVING COMMUNICATIVE PURPOSES. SO WE'D THIS GREAT LESSON ON "THINK IN TERMS OF ACHIEVING COMMUNICATIVE PURPOSES IN A FAMILY ARGUMENT" AND I SET THEM AN ESSAY. NEXT DAY THERE WAS SIXTEEN OF THEIR DADS AND FIVE MUMS WAITING FOR ME AT THE SCHOOL GATE.
IDS
SHOP
Y. 84

A family argument

(iii) Provide adequate context and purpose for the work demanded in the examination.

The following sections deal in detail with these principles.

(2) How to write good questions

(a) Derive questions from purposes

If your examination is covering or sampling the work of the course which has been followed, as we have advocated, the questions should be derived from the purposes of that course-work. These purposes may vary greatly, of course. A novel may be read with a view simply to enjoying the story, or with the intention or hope on the teachers' part that it will enrich pupils' experience or stimulate exploration of their own feelings and ideas. Composition work may be designed to

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practise specific skills or types of writing (like, e.g. "persuasive" or "dialogue") or it might be intended to lead to each pupil finding and developing the kind of writing in which he feels confident. Whatever the course-work purposes, it will usually be possible to derive examination questions from them.

As an example, let us suppose that "The Red Pony" has been read by an S2 class and that broad purposes of the work were, (1) to appreciate the feelings of the main characters as they change with the events of the story, and (2) to explore and learn to describe effectively one´s own experiences and feelings. The setter of an examination would select an appropriate central incident in the story - for instance, the point where Jody finds the dead pony and attacks the vulture - and would identify purposes for reading that particular section which relate directly to the purposes of reading the whole book. He might, therefore, propose that the passage be read -

(i) with a view to explaining Jody´s behaviour in terms of his feelings on finding the pony´s body, and

(ii) as a starting point for each pupil to think about a personal experience of loss.

He then writes an examination question which derives directly from these purposes, viz -

What did Jody do when he found the pony?

Explain as fully as you can what Jody was feeling

(a) while he was searching for the pony

(b) when he found it, and

(c) during the attack on the vulture.

(b) Vary the type of question

It is clear that, if examination questions and assignments are derived from purposes of work, they are likely to take various forms. It is undesirable to use always the same type of question, such as, for instance, the type of literature question set at SCE ´O´ Grade, because such a practice would indicate either lack of variety in purposes of work, or, possibly, lack of any clear purposes of work. Merely as an indication of the range of devices available to assess achievement of different purposes, we offer the following (not exhaustive) list of types of question or assignment which might be used in testing response to literature. (The terminology used here is not that in which questions would be written).

Purposes of work	Type of questions
1. To read a story and recollect the principal events.	1. (a) Give a summary of the story. or (b) Complete a cloze test (or an adaptation of cloze procedure) on a summary of the story written by the teacher, the missing words being crucial to a correct version of events. or (c) Given a passage from the story, describe it.
2. To read a story and recognise how events link together to form a plot.	2. Given a passage from the story, explain why (a) events described are important, how they were caused by previous events and/or lead to subsequent ones. or (b) Given, say, five "key" incidents in the story in random order, place them in chronological order, or in order of significance, explaining inter-relations.
3. To recognise and empathise with the feelings of characters and understand how their feelings are influenced by events.	3. (a) Give an account of a character in the traditional way. or (b) Imagine yourself to be the character either in the novel or play, or in one "outside of the text" and describe your feelings/attitudes/behaviour.
4. (a) To read a text "closely" to pick all the implications of the writer's use of language,	4. (a) "Practical Criticism" question, on studied or unseen texts, with greater or lesser degrees of guidance in the questions as

structure, plot etc.	to key elements in the text to be considered, depending on specific purposes for reading it.
(b) Recognition of linguistic features in a text (e.g. of words in poem associated with the theme of "power").	or (b) Simple underlining of words in the text.
5. To read for enjoyment and reflection on a story (or poem or play).	5. "´O´ Grade-type" questions, giving pupils the chance to choose well-liked, favourite texts and account for their enjoyment.

(c) Provide context and purpose in the examination itself

As far as possible, examination questions and assignments should not only be derived from teaching purposes, but should be given contexts and purposes within the examination itself. Examinations should be educational experiences as well as means of assessment. To this end, a number of techniques can be employed in setting questions.

(i) Writing assignments

THERE HE WAS, JUST FILLING IN SOME TIME, WITH A CUP OF TEA AND A BRIOCHE, OR MAYBE IT WAS A MADELEINE.
P.
MCMLXXXIV

Respond to something as meagre as a title

Unfortunately, teachers, following the example of 'O' Grade often ask children to respond to something as meagre as simply a title for an essay.

It is important to give pupils some help by fairly heavy contextualising. If the writing task set in the examination arises directly out of course work - if, for instance, it is set on the same theme as has been explored in class - there is less need for providing a context in the question. Otherwise, it is possible to provide ideas and orientation by using pictures as stimuli, by using a passage or reading to lead into the writing (it might be the passage set for the reading test), and by giving in the questions indications of the purpose (spelling it out), intended reader, circumstances in which the writing is supposed to be done, and suggestions as to how they structure their response. Because it is more easily understood and more realistic, this approach is much more effective, than instructions to write "a description", "an argument" or "a composition". It should be remembered, too, that many pupils in S1/S2 find it very difficult to sustain a lengthy essay of the traditional 300/400 word type. It may be more profitable to set a variety of shorter responses (e.g. a paragraph, a snatch of dialogue etc.).

(ii) Reading

Sometimes, a passage is chosen from a book known to the class. Even here, it is very desirable to remind the class of the context of the passage, and give them every assistance as they approach the more detailed interpretation task. If the passage is entirely unknown to them, it is positively essential to create a context, by making clear in an introduction the circumstances surrounding the extract, or any other relevant matters. The text itself should be of some length and complete and self-contained. It might be a poem, a whole short story, sizeable section of a novel - in short, anything which is not a passage sliced away from a context without which it is difficult to grasp its full meaning. Every pupil taking the examination should be able to understand and respond to at least some elements in the text. In other words, the level of difficulty must be watched.

There is no reason why, in the case of a story, or a lengthy extract, the text should not sometimes be read aloud to the pupils before they start thinking about the questions, in order to obviate the danger of some pupils finding the length daunting to read on their own. There is also nothing instrinsically sacred about one hour or one hour and a half as the length of an examination: an afternoon might actually allow a more valid assessment of response to a text than an intensive short time test.

Reading tests can also be given purpose by specifically stating before the questions the intentions with which pupils should read the text (e.g. to work out what various characters must feel, or to judge someone's behaviour).

6.2.3 Examinations: Reliability

6.2.3.1 Reliability and the assessed

If examinations (perhaps two in a school year) were the only assessment method used in a school, it would be difficult to guarantee "pupil reliability". Some pupils will not be at their best, some will choose options which suit the little knowledge they have, others will choose questions which do not allow them to show their strengths, and so on. It is established, however, that the longer the test (provided it is all valid), the less chance there is of external factors affecting the assessment. A fairly lengthy examination in which validity has been assured, conducted, say, over two or three days, will reduce the likelihood of chance factors affecting the pupil as he exhibits his state of knowledge and skills.

It should here be pointed out that course-work assessment is the logical means of reducing to a minimum the influence on the pupil of such factors as physical surroundings, emotional states, differing degrees of motivation at different times etc. One way of dealing with these problems is to have a fairly large course-work folio component in any assessment.

Obviously, decisions about length and frequency of examinations and use of course-work assessment will be influenced by the time available for taking and marking an examination, the practicality of a course-work assessment system, the undesirability of disrupting teaching too often, and other factors.

It is important too, that careful consideration be given to the simple working of instructions and questions in any assessment procedure. Clarity is vital if the test is to be the same for all.

To ensure maximum reliability, the test should, of course, be taken by all pupils under the same conditions. This is straightforward enough if we are dealing with a traditional sort of examination, but may need some care if the examination allows, for instance, reference to a literature text: in this case it would be necessary to ensure that all texts used were identical and that none carried more annotations than another.

6.2.3.2 Reliability and the assessor

Perhaps the most obvious problem at school level is that of marker unreliability within the same marker and between one marker and another.

1. One paper, one marker

Normally in school, unreliability among markers can be avoided by having one teacher mark all of one part of the examination/ assessment, if possible, in accordance with a marking scheme (statement of criteria and levels of achievement) discussed and modified by two or three colleagues. Whether they are marking alone or in a team, it is important that markers, even the most experienced, remember that their own judgments are likely to be inconsistent over time.

The SEB recommendation to mark initially every tenth script in the bundle and to re-scrutinise those scripts as they come up for marking is a way of helping to maintain some consistency.

2. One paper, several markers

Where there is more than one marker to a paper, the main difficulty arises from variations in the judgments of the different markers as to quality in answers. This is a thorny and ancient problem - there are reports going back into the 1890's of work on inconsistencies among markers of English composition in public examinations.

What can be done to improve reliability when more than one marker is involved?

(i) The first step is to ensure that scripts are distributed to markers on a random basis, so that no marker receives only good performances or poor ones. If this is not done, but if, for example, a marker receives one "top set" to mark, his sense of the overall standard of the pupils involved will be distorted and he will award lower marks than deserved by comparision with pupils in other classes.

(ii) There are three means of moderation which can be employed whether the basis of standardisation is a standard set by one person or a group consensus. In the former case the three techniques are used to reduce discrepancies as to severity/leniency, spread of marks and inconsistency between markers and the standard setter, in the latter between individual markers and the consensus of all the markers.

   (a) Marking instructions. Have clearly defined criteria for success at each relevant level or grade, and make these available to the markers. If "consensus" agreement is sought, the group of markers should have the chance to modify these marking instructions.

   (b) Markers' meeting. Hold a markers' meeting at which sample (photocopied) scripts, previously marked by the markers, are used to exemplify the use of the marking instructions. About 8 - 10 scripts of varying quality are enough for the purpose. These then serve as "touchstones" to which the markers may refer while working through their batches.

Marking instructions and at least a brief standardising meeting about them are essential for a reasonably reliable single-marked assessment. As indicated above, they are desirable, but less crucial, if there is double-marking of composition designed simply to discriminate among the pupils.

(c) Check on a sample of scripts. The third technique is more difficult to use, but is helpful if time can be found for it. It involves the sampling of a number of scripts (10%, or 5% if the batch is larger than 200) to check that the marker is continuing to conform to the agreed standards.

(iii) If the basis of standardisation is consensus there are two possible approaches alternative to the moderation techniques above.

(a) Multiple or double-marking, even on a quick impression basis, will achieve a fairly reliable rank order, so long as there is no concern to describe pupils' achievements in detail.

(b) A variant of multiple-marking is group marking. The scripts are marked by several teachers in a central place, either on an impression basis or using an analytic marking scheme. If there is time, every script can be marked by at least two teachers; if not, "problem" cases, on which the marker had been uncertain, can be isolated for scrutiny by someone else. This system has the advantage of encouraging balanced marking by making every marker physically aware of the "spread of marks", since marked scripts are placed in piles according to the grade awarded: the relative numbers of scripts judged to be of high, average and low quality can be seen at a glance. A second advantage is that consultation can occur on the spot if two teachers markedly disagree on a script and conflicting interpretations of how the marking scheme applies to a script can be resolved.

3. Several papers, several markers

(Combining marks for different assessments). Marker-unreliability can also be reduced by simply combining marks or grades for two or more assessments marked by different markers - e.g. an examination composition common to all and the class teacher's mark(s) for course-work composition. Apart from the fact that this increases the validity of the assessment (by sampling more of the pupil's work), it probably increases reliability a little, even without any post-marking adjustments to correct a marker's possible aberrations. (See Spencer, 1981). It is still highly desirable, however, that the teachers involved should have discussed common criteria, perhaps at a department meeting.

As far as concern for reliability is concerned, i.e. concern that pupils' assessment should not be influenced by chance factors, the device of combining marks/grades for different work marked by different teachers is better than having one teacher alone mark several pieces of work (e.g. in a pupil's "folio"), because, probably, more unreliability arises from differences between markers than from differences between tasks. The additional teacher's mark may be for examination work or for part of a "folio".

Notes

(a) Restricting options in a composition test. In the case where an examination mark/grade for composition is combined with a mark/grade for course-work and the examination composition is marked by several markers singly, it is possible to further improve marker-reliability by removing the options in the examination so that there is only one common topic. This can be without unfairness if the type of composition chosen is one which all the pupils have practised and are expected to be able to do and if their course-work, which in this case is receiving equal weight in the assessment, has required them to write several other kinds of composition.

It is emphasised that this suggestion should only be implemented when there is an adequate amount of varied writing demanded in the course-work - otherwise there is a danger that teachers may teach only what the examination will require. If the members of a department agree to develop, e.g. four or five types of writing in the year, know that all will be given weight in course-work assessment, but do not know which will appear in an end of session examination, there is strong strong pressure on them to ensure that their pupils have every opportunity to practise all of them. The examination could in this way have a beneficial effect on teaching.

(b) Note on "using the full range" in marking composition

When the main purpose of assessment is discriminatory - i.e. the production of a rank order in some form - the marking should seek to discriminate, and should avoid the typical "bunching" of most of the candidates on and around the pass mark. In principle, if you are marking a composition out of 30, with the intention of ranking the pupils, you should use all the range of marks. There is, however, (as always), a snag. Assessment in English is of complex linguistic and social skills by judges who can legitimately differ somewhat in their views. It is consequently impossible to produce very fine discrimination which is reliable - i.e. likely to be replicated exactly or almost if the assessment were repeated. We can be fairly sure of reliability recognising "high quality", "average quality" and "low quality", and possibly two additional grades between "high" and "average" and between "average" and "low", but it is meaningless to claim an educationally significant difference between, say 52% and 54% on an English examination, or between 14/30 and 15/30 for composition. It is normal for examination boards to regard 5% of the marks as the minimum educationally significant difference between two assessments in English, i.e. they will not expect to find real differences in quality between two scripts unless they have been given marks differing by 5 or more out of 100.

The implication for marking school examinations is clear. If you are trying to rank pupils, it is best to think in terms of 5 broad bands of performance, or, at most, 9 bands, rather than in terms of marks out of 30, 50 or 100 etc. In this way meaningless distinctions will be avoided, and there will be more likelihood of using the full range of 5 or 9 bands available.

Section 7

DEPARTMENTAL PROCEDURES: FROM SYLLABUS TO PROFILE

7.1 OVERVIEW

The basic concept of this document is that assessment serves rather than dominates teaching. Within the general aims of the syllabus, formative assessment monitors pupil progress and informs teaching. Summative assessment measures achievement while reflecting but not dictating the course. Assessments should be commmunicated intelligibly to those who need them - pupils, parents, teachers.

7.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR DEPARTMENTS

From these premises certain implications arise. One is that the management of assessment depends on efficient documentation. It is a truism to say that this should be reduced to a minimum consistent with serving the interests of all concerned. Principal teachers should consider the place in their assessment policy for some or all of the following:

7.2.1 Statement of aims and objectives

This would be part of the departmental syllabus which should be available to staff, particularly new members and probationers, and also to staff of other departments, since with the current emphasis on language across the curriculum they are concerned to know what the English Department is doing, and perhaps to parents, who are not always aware of new trends in English teaching.

Some schools prefer to keep aims and objectives fairly succinct, as in this example:

AIMS:

To develop the pupil's writing skills.

To develop the pupil's oral/aural skills.

To encourage the pupil to read for enjoyment and understanding.

To promote the personal development of the pupil through the above.

An individual grows and matures as his language skills develop. The task of the English teacher is to create the learning situations in which this development can take place.

S1/S2 OBJECTIVES:

The objectives which follow are not empty statements with a purely decorative function. They are central to the activities of the English classroom and should be reflected in the planning and execution of these activities. Indeed, with certain obvious refinements, they inform English teaching at the highest level of the school.

Writing objectives

The pupil should be able to:

(i) Write neatly.

(ii) Express himself in a grammatically correct manner.

(iii) Express himself in several types of written English in such a way as to communicate his thoughts, ideas, feelings or understanding to a reader.

Reading objectives

The pupil should be able to read the written word and show:

(i) An understanding of content.

(ii) A response to content.

(iii) The beginnings of an appreciation of style and expression.

Oral/aural objectives

The pupil should be able to:

Participate in a variety of oral/aural situations and show himself capable of both articulation and understanding.

Another school has a more detailed preamble in which different aspects of English teaching are listed (basic skills, cultural heritage, sociological stance, language/communication, personal development) and glossed, with the reminder that "the blend of these aspects by any English teacher ... must be part of his professional judgment".

It is important that any statement of aims be drawn up or revised by the department as a whole. The point we are stressing here is that a formulation of aims implies a corresponding obligation to formulate modes of assessment.

7.2.2 The syllabus

Schools vary greatly in the amount of detail they include in syllabuses. Some issue work schemes for S1 and S2 indicating general and specific aims, units of work with the time scheme to be followed and directions about the standardised assessments.

A more open-ended approach is taken by another school. Here the syllabus headings are: Aims, Organisation (dealing with problems of mixed ability and groupings); Course-Content: (a) Framework (i) The Imaginary Community Project, (ii) The Anthological Project, (iii) The Thematic Study, (iv) The Unit Study, (b) Literature (i) Recreational Reading, (ii) Reading Together, (c) Language Teaching (i) Remedial Language, (ii) Learning about Language, (d) Spoken English; assessment.

Each item is discussed in detail and guidance offered but timing and emphasis are left to the individual teacher. Under Assessment, a "suggested outline" is given of assignments which might be used for assessment, e.g. "A story in which the main character has to accomplish a dangerous or difficult task"; "A spoken dialogue (in groups of two) in which the speakers discuss a third character who is not present"; "Comprehension" - previous types of question plus one or two concerned with the writer's attempts to influence the reader in S1, via the course content and framework indicated above, so as to be able to make assessments on the lines suggested. In making the assessment he will keep in mind the purpose of each activity. He will also, one hopes, use the assessment as formatively as possible.

As well as showing the general approach to assessment preferred by the department, a syllabus should indicate any diagnostic tests to be used and the role of the Remedial Department in assessment procedures.

7.2.3 Checklists

A checklist is not a syllabus, we are often reminded. This is so, but checklists can be useful pocket guides to places that could or should be explored in teaching. A common checklist is one which lists activities which pupils should practise in the four modes of English. It has the disadvantage of seeming to compartmentalise the teaching of English, whereas we know the four modes are interdependent, and even to section off the "subskills" as discrete activities, even though writing a letter and writing an argument have many things in common. Another danger of checklists is that we may forget the purpose of a piece of work in English, which may vary from pleasing the teacher, gaining a point over a classmate, exploring one's fears about death or the dark, to trying out new vocabulary or understanding the other sex.

From an assessment point of view, however, checklists are useful firstly in helping teachers gain an extensive rather than selective picture of the pupils and their achievements, especially when linked with the idea of purpose. Thus, under oral skills, telling a funny story might seem a talent one could live without, yet in today's culture, particularly our Scottish culture, it is a distinct asset. It is a skill which can be practised, refined, indeed assessed, by a teacher, peers and the story-teller himself. And if we pursue the idea of purpose a little further, the success of the story will depend partly on the audience and the situation and the story-teller's skill in finding an appropriate tone and register. Secondly, as the reference to purpose reminds us, most, perhaps all, language activity is purposeful behaviour and awareness of purpose will help refine modes of assessment. And we must not forget that the pupil's purpose in say writing an imaginary conversation with Alan Breck may be different from the teacher's in asking him to do it: the pupil may have succeeded in writing enough to get by but not in soaking up the atmosphere of Kidnapped.

It follows from this that a checklist of purposes of activities in English could well be combined with the actual checklist of activities. It is then up to the teacher, having in mind the aims and objectives of the curriculum, to translate these purpose-linked activities into actual activities and to assess the results.

7.2.4 Correction codes

Although, as we have noted earlier, the ubiquitous red biro approach to marking is less common than of old, a simple correction code is helpful to teachers and pupils, covering the areas of spelling, punctuation, paragraphing and expression. It is doubtful whether, under "expression", matters of syntax, usage, style and register can usefully be distinguished at S1/S2 level, though some pupils might be helped by "T" for "wrong tense". More important is the use to which the code is put. It if it merely a record of faults the pupil may not feel much urgency to improve. If it is a proof-reading guide which helps in a redrafted version this is a much more formative procedure. If the expression is weak or clumsy a pupil may be asked to re-write one or two sentences after reading his work to the teacher.

Equally important is positive marking, i.e. ticking an apt word or phrase or making constructive comments e.g. "The detail here is not so good as in your second paragraph. Why? List some points you could use in a redraft". If a mark or grade is given the pupil must have a good idea of what it represents, e.g.

A = Very good work; many good features, few errors.

B = Good; you can be pleased with this.

C = Good in some ways; let us discuss how to improve this work.

Some consultation with other departments is useful in establishing what are considered keywords and phrases in other disciplines, what conventions of layout etc. are expected and any other points that might cross-relate to the marking of English assignments.

7.2.5 Assessment criteria

Assessment criteria should not be used only or mainly for putting a final value on a pupil's work. That is a very proper function, of course, and one which many who have been involved in marking Composition papers at "O" Grade or "H" Grade are familiar with. We need, however, to extend our use of criteria in two ways: to take in Talk, Listening and Reading in addition to Writing; and to use the criteria at all stages of the pupils' work, not just after it is completed.

Criteria are linked to purposes and if we take, for example, one talk purpose such as "conveying information" we can probably agree that the speaker can be assessed using two or three likely criteria:

(i) has the speaker included all the relevant information?

(ii) has the speaker given the information in an order that makes it readily understood?

(iii) has the speaker spoken clearly enough?

Conveying information is an important skill as all of us who have had cause to phone the Fire Brigade know. We might, though, in any one task, depending on the nature of the circumstances or of the message or of the audience, put more importance on one of these criteria than on the others.

Identification of the basic criteria allows us to proceed to the next stage: enlarging each criterion in order to grade different levels of achievement. Iain Morris, for example, in Syllabus Design, one of two pamphlets in the Planning for English in S3 - 4 series published by SCDS Edinburgh Centre, offers just such an enlargement in order to grade achievement in the skill of creation of character as found in personal or story writing:

A. Character convincingly created. Both physical and personality aspects defined through reference to behaviour (actions and reactions)/comment/mannerisms/distinguishing features highlighted.

B. Character less convincingly created. Relevant choice of character but perhaps more stereotyped or artificial than convincing. Tendency to list rather than reveal attributes. Some attempts made to introduce both personality and physical characterisation.

C. Patchy characterisation with too much stereotyping. Tendency for story to become more important than character.

D. Basic character only. Little attention to detail. Wanders into story rather than character.

E. Little or no real characterisation. Little sense of demands of question.

It will be clear enough how such criteria, whether expressed as questions (as in the Talk example) or as statements as above, can be used to assess the finished products of the pupil's work. But more importantly the "positive" criteria can be used by the teacher before the work begins to identify for the pupil the nature of the task and by the pupil to evaluate his own progress. Furthermore, both "positive" and "negative" criteria can be used by the teacher or the pupil at the first draft stage to draw attention to the different problems attaching to that particular Talk or Writing purpose; and by using a sample of the class draft performances (on tape or in writing) in conjunction with the criteria, to show what different solutions to these problems are being devised. (For writing this can be done easily and unfussily on the overhead projector - another argument for that excellent teaching machine). We would suggest, also, that such criteria sometimes, when our pupils' performances as a whole class show ineptitude, can help us to see just at what points our teaching has not adequately prepared the class for the task and/or what we need to do with the class now to remedy an obvious weakness. And finally one signal value of their use is that they continually remind the pupil (and the teacher) to focus on the particular purpose(s) of the task. In all these ways criteria assist the process of formative assessment and if the finished products are summatively assessed using those same criteria, the grade received should be capable of ready understanding by the pupil and justification by the teacher.

7.2.6 Records, profiles and reports

I GOT AN A
I GOT AN A
I GOT LET AFF ON THE GROUNDS OF INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE.

Insufficient evidence

The move towards a fuller description of pupil achievement has incubated a dilemma: as the profile becomes more detailed the demands on teacher time become heavier. One teacher notes that the profile system "has had a beneficial effect on my teaching. For example, it has forced me to come to grips with the haphazard way in which I usually attempt to develop and assess reading skills - particularly with non-fiction - and study skills. The profiles have also proved quite useful to other teachers. At our departmental meetings we have been pleasantly surprised at how much information - albeit of a fairly basic, general kind - we could glean from each other's profiles". This teacher is also very much aware of the problems: insufficient time; insufficient evidence on which to assess a particular pupil in a particular area; how to interpret the evidence; what to do about a pupil's problems etc.

It is clearly desirable to streamline the system. As we have suggested above (see 2.3), the basic documentation would be

(a) a record of work, with teacher comments, for the pupil (Appendix 1)

(b) a profile, the first part available to the pupil (Appendix 2)

Other documentation, such as checklists and reports to parents, will relate to these.

Section 8

APPENDICES

1. Pupil´s Record of Work
2. Pupil Profile
3. A Categorisation of School Writing
4. Checklist of Reading Skills
5. Attentive Listening and Oral Paraphrasing
6. a. Example of Examination Design
   b. Example of Examination Illustrating Recommended Strategy

Appendix 1

ENGLISH WORK RECORD

NAME OF PUPIL.. CLASS .... SESSION ....

DATE	WORK, PROJECT OR ACTIVITY	TEACHER'S *GRADE OR COMMENT	PUPIL'S COMMENT

* A = Good. You are doing well here.
B = Quite good but see my comment.
C = Come to me for some help on this.

APPENDIX ...2..

PUPIL PROFILE BASED ON WORK IN ENGLISH

PART A SESSION .... PUPIL'S NAME...................................... CLASS ....

	Date of Comment	LISTENING*	Date of Comment	SPEAKING*
STRENGTHS				
WEAKNESSES				
	Date of Comment	READING*	Date of Comment	WRITING*
STRENGTHS				
WEAKNESSES				

* SEE DEPARTMENTAL CHECKLISTS OF SKILLS AND ACTIVITIES

APPENDIX ...2.... PUPIL PROFILE (Continued)

PART B (CONFIDENTIAL)

Date of Comment I **PUPIL'S CONFIDENCE IN HIMSELF AND WILLINGNESS TO UNDERTAKE THE WORK:**

II **PUPIL'S CAPACITY FOR SELF ASSESSMENT**

III **OTHER COMMENTS INCLUDING SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AFFECTING THE PUPIL'S WORK AND PROGRESS:**

Date	TEST SCORES (IF APPLICABLE)				COMMENTS
	EXAMINATION RESULTS				

FINAL GRADE/COMMENT TO BE INCLUDED ON REPORT TO PARENT:

CLASS TEACER ....

PRINCIPAL TEACHER ....

Date ....

A Categorization of School Writing

I **SUBJECT-LEARNING PURPOSES** (See Note 2)	*LIKELY READERS* (See Note 5)	*QUALITIES IN WRITING (RELATED TO THIS GROUP OF PURPOSES AND THIS READERSHIP)*	*EXAMPLES OF SCHOOL ASSIGNMENTS (SUBJECT-LEARNING PURPOSES)*
(1) To aid memorisation of subject content (2) To store information (for revision later) (3) To allow teacher to check on learning (4) To write as will be required to succeed at 'O' or 'H' Grade in each subject (5) To clarify and organise thought (6) To show that one is qualified to join the 'guild' of Scientists, Geographers (or whatever subject specialists) by one's command of the language and style of the subject	Self Teacher as helpful 'expert' Teacher as examiner Examiner	(1) Accurate copying of facts, methods, definitions. (2) Accurate recall of facts, methods, definitions, vocabulary, shown by writing them out (3) Showing *understanding* of concepts, vocabulary presented by teacher or on worksheet, etc, by reproducing the ideas/information in own words or by using them in an answer (4) Showing understanding of the relationship between facts, concepts, stages in a process, etc, by appropriate structuring of own words writing (5) Use of the subject *style* (as well as vocabulary) — eg, passive voice in Science reports	(1) Copied notes (2) Dictated notes (3) Fill-in-the-space answers on worksheets (4) One-sentence (or less) answers to questions { these may be answers to questions testing memory or, more usually, to questions testing understanding of some information just given in a passage of text (so that the answers have to be *found*, rather than composed) (5) 'Own words' notes on classroom activity on discussion on talk on media presentation (6) 'Own words' records of classroom activities, eg, Science experiment (7) Answers to 'examination-type' questions. These may be in multiple-choice or short-answer form or may sometimes require up to 2 paragraphs of continuous writing (before 'O' Grade) or (in S5, before 'H' Grade) occasionally a more extended answer *NOTE that Nos 1-4 (meeting subject-learning purposes 1-3) account for about 75% of the volume of all written work in school — copied or dictated notes; about 50% by volume, sentences and 'fill-in-the-word': about 25% by volume.*

II **'INTRA-PERSONAL PURPOSES'** (See Note 3)	*LIKELY READERS* (See Note 5)	*QUALITIES IN WRITING (RELATED TO THIS GROUP OF PURPOSES AND THIS READERSHIP)*	*EXAMPLES OF SCHOOL ASSIGNMENTS*
(1) To develop confidence in the value of one's own observations, knowledge ideas . . . (2) To develop confidence in writing (3) To develop writing skills (4) To record events, feelings, reactions as a personal record (5) To explore, define, account for one's knowledge, feelings, attitudes and opinions (6) To explore the possibilities of the language one possesses, to see what emerges when it is 'played with', tried out in various ways (7) To show how clever, knowledgeable, thoughtful, interesting, linguistically adept one is; to obtain the satisfaction of impressing the reader (8) To write as will be required at 'O' Grade (English)	Teacher as helpful expert (English teacher usually) Self Teacher as trusted adult Teacher as examiner Examiner (Occasionally) other pupils	(1) Statement of own ideas, observations, showing personal knowledge of the subject/situation and own responses, feelings and attitudes (2) Apparent personal involvement in the topic — confidence that one's communication is worthwhile (3) Internal relevance or unity of theme — appropriateness of ideas/observations to topic (4) Organisation of ideas, observations, views, etc, showing connections, relationships among them. There are various possible principles of such organisation, eg, logic, free association of ideas, stream of consciousness, chronological order, significant memories, etc, etc (5) Appropriate choice from a range of linguistic possibilities leading to: (a) appropriate and effective vocabulary (b) appropriate tone, showing awareness of the reader (where a reader is envisaged) (c) use of the sentence form (d) variety of appropriate sentence structures (e) appropriate linguistic corollaries of the organisation of the content (linking, cohesion, paragraphing) (6) Correctness of: (a) grammar (b) punctuation (c) spelling	('Intra-personal' purposes are often incorporated in 'inter-personal' or 'artistic' writing: hence, many of the assignments listed under those headings would also apply here. Those listed here are those with *predominantly* 'intra-personal' purposes.) (1) Personal log or diary of school work and, perhaps, of feelings about it. (2) Accounts of personal experience and reactions to it, feelings about it, intended to formulate — or grasp — what one's reactions, feelings actually are (or were). (3) Statements of personal views, opinions, value position vis à vis various topics. (4) 'Own words' notes on or summaries of { classroom activity discussion texts media presentation } with the personal purpose of understanding, clarifying, and grasping information/ideas (5) Any writing done because *the pupil* feels a need to do it, in order to clarify or express his ideas/feelings, or in order to impress. (This purpose may sometimes emerge for a pupil as he or she gets involved in a task set by the teacher.) (6) Any writing in which the pupil, in order to see the effects or for his own enjoyment, 'tries out' or experiments with language. (This shades into 'artistic' writing, qv.) *NOTE that some of these assignments may well be initiated by the teacher, though with the intention that the benefit should be in moving towards the achievement of the 'intra-personal' purposes. Not all — indeed, perhaps not many — intra-personal purposes in writing in schools are actually freely chosen by the pupils themselves. Writing of type 5 above is rare. Most writing having 'intra-personal' purposes is in response to assignments set by the (English) teacher in categories 2 and 3 above.*

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III INTER-PERSONAL PURPOSES	*LIKELY READERS* **(See Note 5)**	*QUALITIES IN WRITING (RELATED TO THIS GROUP OF PURPOSES AND THIS READERSHIP)*	*EXAMPLES OF SCHOOL ASSIGNMENTS (INTER-PERSONAL PURPOSES)*
(a) *More referential, informative, objective purposes:* To record, report, narrate events (factually) To record or convey information To summarise information or argument or significant elements in events, experience, texts, discussion . . . To give instructions for a procedure	Self Teacher as helpful 'expert' Teacher as examiner Examiner (Sometimes) other pupils (Occasionally) some 'real' reader outside of the classroom 'Imaginary readers' proposed by the teacher, or envisaged by the pupil, eg: — newspaper readers — people involved in circumstances in which the task might be done outside of school — the unknown general reader — etc	(a) *With special reference to referential, informative, and objective purposes.* (Some of these qualities apply only to some of the listed purposes) (1) Inclusion of all relevant content, taking account of specific purpose and imagined reader of the writing (2) Appropriate selection of important points (3) Showing/facilitation of understanding of facts, ideas, relationships (eg, in a text) by (a) paraphrasing, (b) illustration (example), (c) analogy (4) Clear and appropriate organisation of content, showing relationships between facts, events, ideas . . . (might be chronological, logical, order of importance, facts separated from comment by author of text, etc) (5) Appropriate use of graphic illustration (6) Appropriate choice from a range of linguistic possibilities leading to: • appropriate and effective vocabulary (generalisation and/or succinctness may be necessary) • appropriate tone, showing awareness of the reader and, eg, conventions of 'register' • variety of appropriate sentence structures • appropriate linguistic corollaries of the organisation of content: linkage, paragraphing . . . (7) Correctness of grammar punctuation, spelling	(a) *With special reference to referential, informative, and objective purposes.* (1) Write instructions for a task or procedure (2) Write a report conveying information for someone else's interest or use (3) Write a report summarising information for someone else's interest or use (4) Give a factual account of events for someone else's interest or use *(Any of 2, 3 or 4 might, for instance, take the form of a magazine article, or be part of an information document for new pupils entering the school, or be functions of a letter of application for a job. Other possibilities are, of course, 'H' or 'O' Grade Past Paper Questions, or Summary or Report exercises from text books)*
(b) *More evaluative, conative, value-laden purposes* To present evidence and draw conclusions To report/narrate events, with evaluative comment To convey information, with evaluative comment To summarise . . ., with evaluative comment To give advice for a procedure To make inferences from, evaluate and comment on ideas (in discussions, texts . . .) To evaluate and comment on the *presentation* of ideas (in texts or in the media . . .) To persuade someone to a point of view or an action		(b) *With special reference to evaluative, conative, and value-laden purposes* All numbers 1-7 above may apply. In addition (depending on the particular purpose(s) of the piece), some of the following may do: (8) Clear statement or implication of one's own relevant knowledge, opinion, feeling, attitude, value-position, with supporting argument/evidence as appropriate (facts, reasoning, illustration by examples, appeal to authority, etc) (9) Awareness of, and account taken of, viewpoints other than one's own (10) Appropriate content created if necessary for conveying one's own ideas, feelings, attitudes (11) Appropriate language use (may include emotive language and rhetorical devices)	(b) *With special reference to evaluative, conative, and value-laden purposes* (5) Any writing of which a main purpose is to tell someone else what you think or feel about events, issues, ideas, literature. (It might be a letter to a friend or to a newspaper or of complaint: or it might be a statement made genuinely for the teacher, perhaps in a personal log or in a more formally set 'composition'. Other possibilities are book reviews and the kind of 'literature answer' which 'O' Grade English questions seek.) (6) Critique of someone else's attitudes, ideas, behaviour, or, perhaps, literary skill. (7) Argument for/against a proposition. (8) Writing to persuade someone to a point of view or an action *NOTE: Examination or class test answers (in various subjects) which require some extended writing will probably qualify as meeting inter-personal purposes, as well as the subject learning purpose 'to allow teacher to check on learning'. Extended answers of this sort are, however, infrequent.*

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IV ARTISTIC PURPOSES (See Note 4)	*LIKELY READERS* (See Note 5)	*QUALITIES IN WRITING (RELATED TO THIS GROUP OF PURPOSES AND THIS READERSHIP)*	*EXAMPLES OF SCHOOL ASSIGNMENTS (ARTISTIC PURPOSES)*
(1) To explore and interpret experience in literary forms (ie. by intellectually or emotionally meaningful patterning of experience, events, relationships, symbols, images, language) (2) To entertain/give pleasure	Self Teacher as helpful 'expert' Teacher as examiner Examiner (Sometimes) other pupils (Occasionally) some 'real' reader outside of the classroom 'Imaginary readers' proposed by the teacher, or envisaged by the pupil, eg: — younger pupils — a specified audience such as 'teenagers' — the unknown general reader	(1) Originality of ideas, perceptions, inventions, use of experience or of reading: strong sense of writer's personality in the writing (2) Contextualisation of events and characters — the creation of a 'world' for them to exist in (3) Selective and meaningful use of events, characters, detail, setting (4) Appropriate ordering of events/observations by logic, chronology, suspense, psychological verisimilitude, or some other perceptible pattern. ('Appropriate' might mean 'original') (5) Presentation of viewpoints and behaviour of characters with various attitudes (different from the author's) (6) Appropriate dramatisation, rather than simple description (ie characters who *act* and thus reveal themselves) (7) Insight into relationships between characters, and so presentation of *changes* in characters' attitudes and behaviour; where appropriate, conflict between characters (8) Appropriate exploitation of sounds and rhythms of language. ('Appropriate' might mean 'original', 'realistic' or 'well-observed') (9) Appropriate exploitation of dialogue. ('Appropriate' might mean 'original', 'realistic' or 'well-observed') (10) Appropriate use of figurative language. ('Appropriate' might mean 'original') (11) Adherence to 'literary rules or conventions' where appropriate: eg, in writing a sonnet or a haiku (12) Use of the form chosen to suggest the possibilities of the meaning of the experience described (eg, its impact on or significance to different characters) (13) Linguistic qualities: appropriate/original language use, emotive language, rhetorical devices . . .	(1) Stories, including the merest shaping and adaptation of real experience, fantasy stories of various kinds, and, *very* occasionally, fully fledged imaginative and (in Aristotle's sense) imitative literature. (2) Poems, including free verse and various other forms, and again ranging from immature attempts to the occasional highly original and significant piece of work. (3) Drama, including both simple dialogue situations, and whole plays (rare). Dramatic writing might be the result of role-play or improvisation. (4) Anything designed to amuse, entertain or please the reader aesthetically — this might include humorous or satirical writing, or evocative descriptive writing (though the latter is usually exceptionally artificial, unless it is contributing to the meaning, setting or atmosphere of a story, poem, or piece of inter-personal communication).

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APPENDIX 4: CHECKLIST OF READING SKILLS

1. FICTION

(i) Outlining Plot

The pupil should be able to tell the teacher or write down a simple summary of the main events of the story, ignoring irrelevant detail.

(ii) Recognising Significant Detail

The pupil should be able to make inferences based on details in the text about character, setting, theme etc.

(iii) Appreciation of Language

The pupil should be able to show an awareness of (though not necessarily give technical names to) the linguistic devices employed by the writers in the stories, poems, he/she reads.

2. NON-FICTION

(i) Listing Main Points

The pupil should be able to tell the teacher or write down a simple summary of the information given or the main points of the argument ignoring irrelevant detail.

(ii) Recognising Supporting Evidence

The pupil should be able to tell the teacher or write down the examples, illustrations etc. used by the writer to make each point.

(iii) Evaluating Arguments

The pupil should be able to distinguish opinion from fact and to recognise false logic or deliberately emotive language in a writer's argument.

NB: Of course, we cannot really talk about a pupil's reading comprehension out of context. We can only say how well the child has answered a particular set of questions on a particular test, and his/her performance will depend on the nature of the questions and the difficulty of the text. This poses obvious problems for the teacher if he has to assess Reading Comprehension as if it were a skill independent of the text being read. Since silent reading is an individual activity involving careful matching of the pupil and text, I can see no way out of the problems at the moment other than that the class teacher lists in the "Reading" Section on page 1 of the Profile the titles of the novels, stories and passages which he/she uses as a basis for filling in this part of the Profile.

3. Skimming

The pupil should be able to read through a passage at high speed (i.e. not reading word for word) in order to get the gist of what the writer is saying.

4. Scanning

The pupil should be able to locate a particular piece of information by running his/her eyes quickly down a text ignoring everything except what he/she is looking for.

(Poor readers of course will probably be unable to skim or scan).

5. Reference Skills

The pupil should know how to use a dictionary and how to use the Table of Contents and Index of textbooks to locate information he/she wants.

6. SQ3R

The pupil knows how to use the SO3R technique on new texts in order to extract maximum information. (This category will be of use mainly to those teachers using SRA).

7. Recreational Reading

Obviously we cannot obtain precise information about what pupils read at home but we can comment on the frequency and enthusiasm of their borrowing from school/class library and on their reading preferences.

APPENDIX 5: ATTENTIVE LISTENING AND ORAL PARAPHRASING [1]

Purpose: To encourage students to organise their thoughts before speaking; to promote attentive listening; and to develop skills in oral paraphrasing.

Suggested time: 10 - 15 minutes.

Organisation: Groups of 3.

Materials: Enough topics, each written on a slip of paper, for everyone in the class.

Procedure: Students take one of three roles: speaker, listener, observer. Each member of the group will have a chance to take each role.

The speaker takes a minute to organise his or her thoughts on the topic assigned.

The speaker talks to the listener while the observer pays careful attention to what is said.

The listener repeats the message to the speaker with the observer trying to spot or point out any changing or omissions in the message. If there are any disputes about interpretation, the observer has the final say.

Topics should be simple and straightforward, requiring clear and organised content. Some suggestions are:

Make an announcement about a dancer or sports event which is coming up.

Give instructions on how to play a game.

Describe your bedroom.

Explain how to get to your home from the school.

Explain how to prepare your favourite food.

Variation: Students might be asked to persuade or argue a point of view instead of, or as well as, giving information to determine if they perceive any differences in either the speaker or the listener when the aim of the communication changes.

Assessment: The teacher plays the part of the observer using a scale like the one below:

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[1] This lesson plan is one of many given in The Ontario Assessment Instrument Pool: ENGLISH II Intermediate Division, (Ministry of Education, Toronto, 1981).

Circle the appropriate number

Speaker	High		Low
- Varies stress and tone for emphasis	3	2	1
- Maintains eye contact and uses appropriate physical gestures	3	2	1
- Speaks without excessive use of hesitation or stablisers	3	2	1
- Speaks at an appropriate pace	3	2	1
- Speaks clearly and fluently, and is able to organise the message in a suitable sequence	3	2	1

Listener	High		Low
- Concentrates on speakers	3	2	1
- Remains attentive without squirming or shuffling	3	2	1
- Recognises the main idea	3	2	1
- Is able to recall appropriate details	3	2	1
- Paraphrases the message closely	3	2	1

General Aims of Term's Work

Reading

Narrative - stories and poems.
To understand how stories are told and appreciate the means by which a 'plot' is made interesting and coherent.

Appreciation and evaluation of the writer's attitudes in various texts.

Writing

Story writing.

"Opinion writing", giving own view in response to an author's.

Writing in roles, to convey varying attitudes.

Talking and Listening

(in particular)

Telling jokes and stories.

Discussing the reasons why the jokes and stories are effective.

Joint (or group) composition and telling of stories.

Role-playing to convey different attitudes to problems.

Actual Courses

In their various classes, teachers choose

(1) Any short stories suitable for the appreciation of either a clear line or the attitude(s) of the author, or both.

(2) Any suitable poems (given the same general purposes).

(3) Various pieces of journalism.

The list of possible short stories is, of course, long. It might happen, for instance, that in different classes the pupils read and discussed:

The Breadwinner	(Leslie Holward)
Storylines	(Arnold Thomson)
An Occurrence at Owl Creek	(Ambrose Bierce)
The Goat and the Stars	(H E Bates)
Stories by Bill Naughton	
Stories by Alan Sillitoe	

The same applies to the poetry. As narrative poems, different classes might read some of e.g.

The Express	(S Spender)
How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix	(R Browning)
The Pied Piper	(R Browning)
John Gilpin	(W Cowper)
The Jackdaw of Rheims	(T Ingoldsby)
The Highwayman	(A Noyes)
The Ice Cart	(W W Gibson)
The Yarn of the Nancy Bell	(W S Gilbert)

As poems which also allow fairly direct access to the attitudes of characters or of the author, different classes might read some of e.g.

My parents Kept Me From Children Who Were Rough	(S Spender)
Timothy Winters	(S Spender)
A Case of Murder	(C Causley)
The Meadow Mouse	(T Roethke)
The Stone	(W W Gibson)

Towards the time of the examination the teachers confer and it is established that all have tried to make pupils aware of narrative techniques in stories and poems and to try to identify and evaluate authors' attitudes, or those of characters.

Only one teacher, however, has in practice used journalism for this latter purpose.

All have required pupils to write stories and to write in roles to convey different attitudes (though only two have done oral role play). Only two teachers have required pupils to write their opinions of an author's attitudes, though all have discusses these.

All have discussed the "mechanics" of jokes and oral short stories and four out of five have done some "group" composition and oral telling of stories.

It is agreed by the Department that, as far as the common ground is concerned, the following weightings should be allotted. ("Weighting" here means not merely "time spent on the skill or topic" but an assessment of its significance relative to other work done).

Response to author's attitudes	- 20%
Appreciation of narrative	- 30%
Writing in roles	- 20%
Story Writing	- 30%

Examination Blueprint

There are three possible approaches:

(1) Each class sets its own examination, followinr our Model 1.

(2) A common examination is set covering the common grounds, but without any attempt to assess the areas not covered in common.

(3) A common examination is set covering the general aims which all classes covered, and the results are combined with or reported alongside class assessments of the different classes including the oral work. This is preferable to (2).

Blueprint for a common examination

Paper I

Reading

Passages in which author's attitudes are clearly conveyed. Questions to test pupils' comprehension of the passages including their appreciation and evaluation of the author's attitudes. Mark out of 20.

Writing

Two short writing assignments, requiring pupils to write to convey attitudes in different roles. Mark out of 20.

Paper II

Reading

"Out, Out" (R Frost)

Questions to test the pupil's awareness of the events of the story and of the feelings of those involved. Also tot est appreciation of some of the techniques used by the writer to convey these feelings and to make the story dramatic. Mark out of 20.

Story Writing

Story writing assignment, with context provided by the stimuli and some guidance given in the instructions.

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APPENDIX 6b: EXAMPLE OF EXAMINATION ILLUSTRATING RECOMMENDED STRATEGY

PAPER ONE

I READING

This passage is from the life story of Bill Shankly, told by himself. It is from Chapter I, "Life in Glenbuck", the village where he was a boy. Read it through to see what it is about.

***

Now read it again (you have plenty of time), but this time, be on the lookout for anything you can find out about 3 things:

1. What does Bill Shankly think about boys stealing?
2. What kind of person was his father?
3. What did he think about the footballers he was in charge of as a manager?

DO NOT WRITE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS.

Just read the passage, trying to see what you can find out about them. You could make notes on each one, if you like.

***

When you have taken plenty of time to read the passage and think about these questions, go on to the written answers.

***

Times were hard when I was a boy and we were hungry, especially in the wintertime. There were farms all around us and we used to steal the potatoes and turnips and cabbages and everything. The village policeman had an awful job. We used to know his every movement. We had spies. The farmers were watching for us, but there was a lot of territory to cover and, when it was getting dark at night, it was hard for them to see!

A chap used to come with his big wagon from Strathaven, a beautiful village near Hamilton. He sold loaves, scones, cakes, currant-cakes - they were brilliant, the currant-cakes - biscuits, milk, all sorts of things. And we used to take things from his wagon.

One night we took a whole bunch of bananas from the wagon of a fruiterer from Clydeside - the biggest bunch you could ever imagine. It took four or five of us to carry it and the bananas lasted for weeks.

Other times we would go to the pits and help ourselves to a bag of coal from the hundreds of tons that were there.

We knew we were doing wrong, but we did not think of it as stealing really. It was devilment more than badness. When we had nothing and took something we did not call it stealing. We were hungry. We needed to satisfy our appetites.

Our parents were too proud even to think we were poor and they would never imagine their children had been pilfering. "Oh, no, not our Jimmy!" If we had owed a millionaire a penny we would have been told, "Pay him!" But there is a moral in all this, because when we grew up we realised that some of the things we had done as boys were wrong, but we had learned from the mistakes and possibly that made us better people in the long run. If you go through life doing more good than bad that should tip the scales in your favour.

My father was a man of character, and he disciplined us. We were frightened of him, of course. Some boys today are not frightened of their fathers and that´s a bad job.

Once, when I had misbehaved at school, one of the teachers, Mr Kirkwood, said, "Do you want your punishment from me or your father?"

"From you," I told him.

That is the kind of respect I had for my father. Everyone should respect their father. Later in life you can use the lessons you learned as a youngster to help you deal with the young. I had a code to live up to as an athlete. I had to be fit and behave myself. And when I became a manager I had a code of discipline for footballers. But I didn´t put anybody in jail or fine them. I had my way of doing things and it was mainly based on mutual respect.

***

Questions for written answers

A. STEALING

1. Shankly mentions stealing from four places.
   What were they? (2)

2. Shankly gives some excuses for the boys who stole.
   What are they? (3)

3. He says, "We knew we were doing wrong, but we did not think of it as stealing really".
   If they did not think it was stealing, why did they think it was wrong? (2)

4. Shankly suggests that all the stealing in the end did some good.
   What good does he say it did? (1)

5. What is your own opinion? Say why you think he is right or wrong to excuse the stealing. (3)

B. SHANKLY´S FATHER

1. "My father was a man of character, and he disciplined us".
   What do you think "disciplined" means here? (1)

2. Why did Bill choose to be punished by the teacher when he misbehaved at school? (2)

3. Write down as much as you can about what Bill Shankly felt about his father. (3)

C. DEALING WITH FOOTBALLERS

1. How had Bill Shankly learned how to deal with young footballers? (1)

2. How did he get them to keep fit and live sensibly? (2)

Total 20

***

II WRITING

Choose TWO of these to write

Imagine that Bill Shankly's father was telling a newspaper reporter about his son's life as a boy in Glenbuck after Bill had become famous. Write what he would have said. You can include some of the things mentioned in the passage, but remember that you are his father when you describe them. You should also make up some things which might well have happened. (10)

***

Imagine that the fruiterer from Clydeside had caught Bill and some of his brothers stealing the bananas. He takes them home by the scruff of the neck, and starts to tell their father what has gone on.

Write down the kind of conversation which there might be. (Remember that the fruiterer, the boys and their father might all have very different thoughts about "stealing"). (10)

***

Imagine that, as a football manager, Bill Shankly has to interview one of his players who has been drinking too much and has been in trouble with the police. Write out what Shankly would say to the player.

(The questions on "Out, Out ... " form an example of the technique of starting with a question going to the heart of the narrative).

Paper II: POETRY AND STORY WRITING (Alternative questions)

I POETRY

Listen to this poem as the teacher reads it, and follow it on the page at the same time.

Now read it again yourself: this time, as you read try to pay attention to three things -

1. What exactly happens in the poem?

2. What has the poet done to make the story interesting and lively?

3. At different points in the poem, how did the boy feel and how did the other people involved feel?

"OUT, OUT ..."

The buzz saw snarled and rattled in the yard
And made dust and dropped stove-lengths of wood,
Sweet-scented stuff when the breeze drew across it.
And from there those that lifted eyes could count
Five mountain ranges one behind the other
Under the sunset far into Vermont.
And the saw snarled and rattled, snarled and rattled,
As it ran light, or had to bear a load.
And nothing happened: day was all but done.
Call it a day, I wish they might have said
To please the boy by giving him the half hour
That a boy counts so much when saved from work.
His sister stood beside them in her apron
To tell them "Supper". At the work, the saw,
As if to prove saws knew what supper meant,
Leaped out at the boy´s hand, or seemed to leap ...
He must have given the hand. However it was,
Neither refused the meeting. But the hand!
The boy´s first outcry was a rueful laugh,
As he swung towards them holding up his hand
Half in appeal, but half as if to keep
The life from spilling. Then the boy saw all ...
Since he was old enough to know, big boy
Doing a man´s work, though a child at heart ...
He saw all spoiled. "Don´t let them cut my hand off ...
The doctor when he comes. Don´t let him sister!"
So. But the hand was gone already.
The doctor put him in the dark of ether.
He lay and puffed his lips out with his breath.
And then ... the watcher at his pulse took fright.
No one believed. They listened to his heart.
Little ... less ... nothing! and that ended it.
No more to build on there. And they, since they
Were not the one dead, turned to their affairs.

(Robert Frost)

---

1. The moment of action in this story poem is when the saw cuts off the boy's hand.

   Put a box round the 5 lines near the middle of the poem which describe this moment.

   Put a (1) in the margin of the poem next to the box you have made.

All the first half of the poem leads up to the moment of the cut. Questions 2 - 6 are about this first half.

2. From the first half of the poem, write out 2 separate lines which tell us what time of day it was.

3. Put a box round 3 lines which show that the yard was in a quite beautiful setting.

   Put a (3) in the margin of the poem next to the box you have drawn.

4. "The buzz saw snarled and rattled in the yard".

   (a) Why are "snarled" and "rattled" good words to use in describing the action of a machine-saw?

   (b) Why do you think the poet began the poem with this particular line?

5. (a) How do you think the boy was feeling just before the cut?

   (b) Which part of the first half of the poem supports your answer?

6. "And nothing happened: day was all but done." (line 9)
   What does this line add to the build-up of the story?

The second half of the poem is about what happens after the cut. Questions 7 - 10 are about this section of the poem.

7. The boy does three separate things after the accident. Say clearly what the three things were.

8. Judging from the poem, what feelings do you think the boy must have experienced after the accident, up to the moment when the doctor made him unconscious with ether.

9. (a) What is meant by, "and that ended it."? (line 32)

   (b) Explain how the poet, in the 2.5 lines before this, built up suspense.

10. When the poet says at the end,

"And they, since they
were not the one dead, turned to their affairs."

he is, in a way, making a comment about all human beings (not just people in the poem). What do you think he is trying to say about us all?

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11. What did you think of this poem?

(In making up your answer, you may wish to think about questions like:

Which part of the poem will you remember? Why?
Is it a well-told story? If so, why?
How did you feel as you read the poem?
What is there to be learned from the poem?)

II STORY WRITING

(NB. It is not impossible to test this in an examination, but it would be much better, considering the time usually needed to gestate, produce and revise a story, to assess a piece of work done over a long period of time in class, or to assess a folio of classwork. If it is done by examination, something like the following might be tried: in each case either some context is provided or the title can be linked to the context of "Out, Out ..." or of one of the pictures).

Write a short story of your own.

You may use a picture or a title of one of the ideas given, or you may use more than one of these.

Your story can be about anything that comes to your mind after looking at the pictures and reading the titles and ideas.

Try to show the reader something of the place in which the story happens; try to make one thing lead to another; and try to make the reader realise how the people involved behave and how they feel about what happens.

***

Pictures	Three pictures, containing people (one, at least, showing people in conflict).
Title	The Ambulance.
Title	Who Cares?
Idea	Imagine that two friends are involved together in business or in some work. Tell the story of the tragic results when one of them does something selfish without consulting the other partner.

Idea

Imagine a family: parents, two, three or four children (perhaps grandparents, too). Tell a story in which one member of the family builds up unhappiness and wants to break away from the family's ordinary life. You could make this main character take either a successful or a disastrous action. Try to show what the other members of the family think about your main character and how they behave towards him or her.

SHORT READING LIST

BROADFOOT, Patricia (1979) Assessment, Schools and Society. Methuen, London. Reviews school assessment from a sociological perspective and "explores the ideology of assessment which is now so widely accepted yet rarely questioned".

GRAMPIAN ENGLISH VIEWS (December 1981) "Oral and Aural English". Grampian Regional Council. Gives some practising teachers´ accounts of teaching and assessing in the areas of oral and aural English.

LAMONT, Colin C (1981) Course Design and Assessment in English: A Discussion Paper. Renfrew Division of Strathclyde Regional Council. Surveys the problems of assessment in English and the relevance of course design: includes samples of profiles with comments.

ROWNTREE, D (1977) Assessing Students: How Shall We Know Them? Harper and Row. A wide-ranging and radical survey of what and how to assess in student learning and how to interpret and respond to that assessment.

SCOTTISH COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH IN EDUCAITON (1977) Pupils in Profile. An anlysis, based on field trials, of profiling principles and techniques, with practical recommendations including suggested "levels" of the four skills of English.

SCOTTISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT (1979) Issues in Educational Assessment. Includes chapters by A E G Pilliner on norm-referenced and criterion referenced tests and by Ernest Spencer on assessment in English, the difficulties of discriminatory assessment and a suggested assessment model for S1 and S2.

STIBBS, A (1979) Assessing Children´s Language: Guidelines for Teachers. Ward Lock. NATE. Looks at samples of children´s language and traditional ways of assessing these and suggests guidelines for a fresh approach.